C. 145, n. 19.

THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD,
A TALE.

T. PLUMMER, PRINTER,
SEETHING-LANE.

THE

NEIGHBOURHOOD,

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

——— Licuit semperque licebit
Parcere Personis, dicere de Vitiis.

The best and surest method of advice,
Should spare the person, tho' it brands the Vice.

Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.

VOL. I.

London:

PRINTED FOR A. AND J. BLACK, AND H. PARRY,

LEADENHALL-STREET.

1800.

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JUL

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THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

CHAP I.

THE trite observation, that neither riches, rank, nor the pursuit of pleasure, unattended and unsanctioned by virtue, can produce happiness, is of so important a nature, that it cannot be too often inculcated. To illustrate and to enforce this golden axiom, is the purpose of the following narrative, in which a plain unvarnish'd tale may, perhaps, serve the cause of integrity, as well as the most fortunate fictions of highest fancy, or the grander effect of the sublimest genius.

After a very long struggle between the love of ease and the love of money, it happened in the year 17— that Mr. Jedediah Pursling, grocer and tea dealer, conveyed the good will of his shop in W—— street to his two nephews, for a valuable consideration. In the fifty second year of his age, Mr. Pursling quitted a very profitable business in London, in the hope of passing the rest of his days in the undisturbed felicities of a rural retreat.

In this sage measure Mr. Pursling resigned the only employment he was calculated to fill, in search of happiness from a situation which neither his disposition, his talents, his acquirements, or his habits, could permit him to enjoy. Mr. Pursling possessed some of the good, and many of the unpleasant qualities of an useful yet despised animal, called an ass: He was at all times obstinate; not unfrequently full of tricks; yet, under burdens, generally patient, laborious and indefatigable. In the beaten path of daily avocations,

avocations, his demeanour was grave, and his steadiness exemplary; but turned aside from that by whim, or a desire of relaxation, his awkward attempts at mirth and gaiety very much resembled those of that ungenteel animal, to which we have already compared him. His very early years had been distinguished by sobriety, diligence and dulness; and as his birth was humble, or rather obscure, education and the advantages of a decent society, had given no polish to his manners, nor any extent to his intellect.

Before he came to London, which happened in his tenth year, he had kept geese on an extensive common in the county of N——. By constantly attending on his waddling flock, he had by degrees contracted an habit of imitating their gait, which he never afterwards was capable of laying aside. His ſlow sidelong ſtep, and his outstretched neck, gave a notable appearance as he paced the area of his shop of faithful perseverance and anxiety, to pick up a livelihood.

For fifteen years subsequent to his arrival in W—— street, he swept the floor and opened the shutters of his master's ſhop; when by the death of some near relations, he was enabled to contribute such sums of money to the firm, as induced his master to admit him into partnership. Other considerable legacies succeeded; so that at the death of his partner, Mr. Pursling was enabled to purchase the ſtock and trade of Moses Wigley, Esq. deceased.

Mr. Pursling's relations, who bore his name, though they had forgotten the family connection during his situation as goose-herd, very readily recollected it when they understood that Mr. Pursling was engaged in a thriving buſiness in London; and when there appeared some probability that the name of Pursling might be enrolled among the Sheriffs or the Mayors of that great city.

Time and the most flinty economy had, with the help of these bequests added to the profits

profits of his shop, rendered the name of Pursling highly accredited among the various companies, and the most respectable clubs. At one of the latter, Mr. Pursling sometimes was awakened from his dreams of *realising*, by very warm praises of a country life, and very enthusiastic encomiums on the beauties of nature. The speaker did not confine himself to the even plains of prosaic narrative, but endeavoured to rouse the imagination of his audience, by the charms of fiction and poetry in its boldest flights.

> He sung that trade was toil and trouble,
> And riches but an empty bubble.

These discourses, animated by a quick circulation of the bottle, excited the different members of the club to launch out into the pleasures which they enjoyed in their short-liv'd visits to their respective villas. At these times, the nearness of the houses to the town; the smallness of the rooms; the dust that invaded them; and the narrow

confines in which they were built, were totally forgotten or ſuppressed.

Some evenings Mr. Purſling returned home with his brain heated with wine, and the ideas of rural felicity; 'till one morning he perceived in the *Ledger*, that the poetical orator of the club was announced a bankrupt. The former viſions now no more inſpired the fancy of Purſling; and what the advice of his ſober friends could not effect, in diſſuading him from diſcontinuing buſineſs, the aforeſaid advertiſement completely brought about; and ſome years more paſſed in diligence and commerce.

CHAP. II.

THE neglect of proportionate exercise, and the sedulous cultivation of the art of eating, had given to the once spare figure of Pursling all the dignity of aldermanic magnitude; but like other dignities, it brought its cares with it. The faculty had in vain admonished him either to retire from his clubs and dinners, or to frequent them less often; and threatened him with the gout, apoplexy and dropsy. In vain had these three warnings been uttered; and the obstinate and luxurious grocer would have dug his own grave with his teeth, had not a quarrel with the warden of his company very fortunately interposed.

In these dinners, which he attended with most conscientious punctuality, did Pursling

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place all his delight and consequence; till an extraordinary talent which he possessed of smelling, occasioned his exclusion from this terrestial paradise.—Walking one day, tho' in great haste to the Exchange, he passed by —— hall, and smelling a dish which was then dressing in the kitchen, (to which he was a great enemy) he stepped in, and desired the cook to omit it at that day's dinner. Abraham Grub, Esq. who had given orders for the preparing of the aforesaid dish, felt himself grossly injured by this countermand, and deemed it a very great insolence in a man so much his inferior in wealth and consequence. He waited for the time of revenge, and was determined, when he was in the chair, to punish the arrogant grocer.

Three years after, Grub succeeded to the chair, when unfortunately Pursling having presented to the company, on a court day, a meat pye of his own composing, received a letter from Warden Grub, rejecting the offer with many terms of disgust and contempt

tempt of the pye, and the pye-maker :—So great was his surprise and indignation, that the fat ribs of Pursling could scarce contain their costly materials. His lungs were convulsed by the rapidity of his respiration, and the carbuncles on his forehead seemed to threaten an immediate conflagration to the adjoining curls of his peruke. In the transport of his passion he vowed a perpetual absence from a society so totally incapable of seeing and encouraging merit.

This adventure, though for a time subversive of his comforts, and a bar to his favourite enjoyments, yet produced a lasting and wholesome change to his constitution in general. Self-banished from these luxurious societies, he began to frequent the more humble clubs in his neighbourhood, when economy and temperance were rigorously observed. Tho' these sober repasts agreed but little with his palate, yet Pursling found ample satisfaction in calculating, that if the dinners were moderate, the expences were

likewise considerably diminished. As he was without competition the richest man in these clubs, he found a pleasure in the attention which was paid to his opinions, as he soon perceived that he was wiser than the rest by several thousand pounds. Being, by this new mode of life, more domestic, his friends advised him to try the social comforts of matrimony.

It has been said of persons who calculate the fortunes of their mistresses, that they make love upon their fingers. This was true of Mr. Pursling; for as his habits kept him at distance from female society, he knew little of the persons whose names were mentioned by his friends; and not being satisfied concerning their pecuniary recommendations, he would have remained a batchelor all his life, maugre the attentions of his friends, and still continued in W—— street, but for circumstances that we are about to unfold in our subsequent pages.

CHAP. III.

IT is asserted by an ancient writer, very conversant with the subject, that love and reverence seldom dwell together. Pursling had experienced the truth of this axiom in his contracted intercourse with women. The majestic air of Cornelia G—, abashed him: The modest dignity of Lucia D—, inspired him with uneasy respect; and the decent reserve, yet lively manners of Amelia S—, filled him with perpetual apprehensions of his own poverty of ideas being the subject of her remarks. But though his feelings were too dull to relish the graces of manner and the charms of intellect, yet did Pursling pine in secret for the beauties of those persons whose accomplishments rendered them objects of his veneration and dislike. Love, like

every other passion, takes its complexion from the mind on which it acts.

" To love and to enjoy, his sole desire,
" He ask'd no cherub's wing, no seraph's fire."

There had lived with Moses Wigley, Pursling's predecessor, a neat modest young woman, to whom Pursling, when a journeyman, had told many a tender tale; and at that time perhaps had intentions of being a faithful shepherd; but honours are said to change manners.

Pursling, now master of the house, assumed the presumptuous hopes of obtaining the favours of Mary on less honourable terms. His proposals were repelled with indignation, or listened to with tears; till a solemn promise of marriage, at a more convenient season, when he should retire into the country and acknowledge her for his wife, at length prevailed over the purity of her mind, and Mary concealed in the arms

of

of Pursling, those blushes which more wise and *sentimental ladies* publish to the whole world in all the pomp of diction, and all the parade of self-approving philosophy.

Pursling, an œconomist and calculator in all his proceedings, had supposed that Mary had now arrived at that time of life, when the chance of his not being a father was much in his favour. But whether the damsel carried more years in her countenance than she was entitled to by the parish register; or whether love had put Pursling out of his reckoning, as it has many greater and sager personages, the amorous grocer was most egregiously deceived. In the usual course of time Pursling became the father of a very fine boy: On this important occasion, Pursling behaved as much unlike a father as a sordid disposition and a disconcerted calculation would consequently produce; and Mary, as like a mother, as a tender and unvitiated heart could teach her to be.

While

While Mary hung unaccounted hours, with a face of ineffable delight over her sweet infant, now pleased with the lively motions of his little hands stretched out towards her; now enraptured with his nods and becks and wreathed smiles, and felt an happiness perhaps a mother only knows; Pursling was sitting in his back parlour, the true resemblance of penitential sorrow. Sometimes he formed plans to conceal this *accident* from the members of the club which he frequented, whilst his hair stood upright with the apprehension of those jokes being applied to himself, at which he had so heartily laughed, when some of his grave and sober neighbours and friends *happened* to be in the same circumstances.—Sometimes he walked backwards and forwards in his room, calculating the probable expences which his new and unexpected visitor might occasion to him: At other times with more complacency, thinking on the probable chances of losing him, by the care or neglect of the nurse whom he had employed, with very little attention to her qualifications

lifications of tenderness and sobriety. On a sudden his paternal reveries were snapped asunder by the opening of the parlour door, by no gentle hand, which introduced to him very abruptly, two persons of no little consequence.

CHAP. IV.

A Gigantic figure of a woman, bearing a child in her arms, and resting him on her mountainous bosom, appalled the magnanimous vender of figs by a tone of voice that a public cryer would have been proud of. As the door communicated with the shop, and as family secrets are better uttered in a whisper, Pursling though much alarmed, had the presence of mind to shut the door on the lady's entrance. "See, master Pursling, here it is, and a spanking lad I warrant:

warrant; aye, these love children are worth a million of others; here are your own pretty eyes and nose, and your frown too as I live: Why madam says as how you have not once been in her room since she has had such a pretty play thing, though it be more than three months since. Why you are not ashamed, master Pursling, be you? Come kiss the sweet little delightful charming—

This torrent of nursery eloquence, rushing from a mouth of no small dimensions, and illustrated by very significant actions, and very intelligible looks, overwhelmed Pursl ng with astoniſhment and indignation. Had not the brawny form of his matron mixed a very considerable portion of fear with his rage, Pursling had cleared the parlour of these unwelcome visitors, in a manner at once abrupt and violent. Though he withheld himself from action, yet was he rash, nay mad enough, to attempt a war of words with his self-appointed lecturer. That Pursling was overborn in this contest of sound

sound need not be told, since his antagonist had added to her usual loquacity that morning, an uncommon influx of indignation, impudence, and brandy. The popular words by which a failure in male integrity and female virtue is expressed, were repeated with an emphasis on both sides, that their well known significations by no means made necessary.

These monosyllables escaped through the key-hole, and conveyed to the young men in the shop much occasion of merriment, at the distress of Pursling, whose mean disposition they detested, and whose austerity of manners they hitherto had feared.

Their loud shouts added to the horrors which Pursling felt in his present situation; and a sudden apoplexy might have followed, had not a very gentle voice from the top of the staircase, operated like oil on the tumultuous sea of troubles below. "Nurse, what is the matter; pray bring up the child immediately."

mediately." This very reasonable demand was immediately complied with, as the child began to be nearly as clamourous as any of the parties. Dame Caudle left the field with all the honours of war that last words could confer; when the door was closed to by her brawny arm, the threat, "if you'll take the child ma'm, i'll soon *settle* this white liver'd rascal below; fixed to his chair, with increasing horrors the aſtonished grocer.

When the enemy retired, the spirits and courage of Pursling increased, in proportion to the distant sound of Dame Caudle's retreating footsteps; and he swore that he would be master of his own house in spite of old dame brandy face, and madam squeamish her ally.

Conscience told Pursling that this unwelcome visit was in consequence of a conspiracy between Dame Caudle and Mary Staunton, the mother of the young stranger; and that

that this family lecture was read by commission by the said Dame Caudle; Being provided with a large mouth, a stout figure, and a violent temper, and other necessary accomplishments for that purpose. He rather wished to believe that this was the case than really thought it, for he knew that Mary's disposition was mild, and underbearing to an excess, and she that carried

> 'Her heart upon her sleeve,
> For daws to peck at."

His own sensations, moreover, contradicted this supposition; for during the aforesaid jobation he felt, that if all the invectives of Dame Caudle were not true, yet it appeared certainly that she thought so; and he acknowledged too much energy in her eloquence, to suspect that such expressions could flow from feelings at second hand.

We leave Pursling to his tender moments of paternal recollections, to relate the immediate cause of his present troubles.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE interruption of the calculations and œconomical reflections of Pursling, (as related in the last chapter) may like other great events be traced to a proportionate cause.

During this morning, so fatal to the repose of this recreant knight, Mary Staunton felt a great depression of mind, and increased it by the sad recollection of her present situation, and the unkind behaviour of her lover since the birth of the young illegitimate grocer. Dame Caudle perceiving the lowness of her spirits, had immediate recourse to her own closet for a bottle of cherry bounce, in such cases provided: and giving a little in a glass to her patient, tossed off an hearty bumper

bumper herself, to the recovery of Mary's good humour. Mary much relieved by this very uncommon beverage, became alert and gay on a sudden; played and fondled with the child; talked a great deal to the nurse, who was delighted with her own skill in curing bad spirits, and ſoon caught the contagion of her mistress's loquacity.

Mary Staunton, in the openness of her heart, told Caudle with what furious marks of indignation Pursling had received the first news of her pregnancy. That he had often abused her ear with suspicions injurious to her fidelity to him: These she considered as an attempt of Pursling to get rid of her. A consciousness of being faithful to him had kept her mind quiet during these strange accusations, which she had received in contemptuous silence, which frequently abashed him, and always sent him out of the room. Notwithstanding this conduct, she could not help now and then feeling very unhappy at observing his altered looks and unkind treatment

ment of her, during her lying-in: she was in particular, very much grieved that he had not visited her room but once since her delivery: and then he enquired, in a very abrupt manner, whether the child was a boy or a girl; and on receiving an answer, he quitted her in the same abrupt manner, drawing or rather banging the door after him, with a noise that shook her almost to pieces.

At the various intervals of this pathetic narration, Dame Caudle experienced the various sensations of pity, indignation, and contempt: and as frequently endeavoured, by a cup of the good creature, to allay these different perturbations of her mind. This mixture of sorrow, anger and brandy, had worked up the combustible passions of this dauntless virago to a high pitch of sentimentality.

Now approaching to a state of intoxication, she snatched the child out of the hands

of

of the mother; and descending in great haste towards the parlour, she meditated a most violent attack on the fears, if not on the sensibility of Pursling; and was determined to speak her mind fully on the behaviour of Pursling to Mary Staunton and her child. His fears, indeed, were sufficiently alarmed by this bullying ambassadress; but his insensibility and obstinacy, no powers of rhetoric could act upon, however animating, or however persuasive.

Indifference, in wisdom's guise
All fortitude of mind supplies.

This indifference about his conduct as a moral agent, Pursling felt with all the coolness of a stoic; but his anger was much roused, that his behaviour should be publicly arraigned in his own house, to the diminution of his character and authority.

Actuated by these sensations, he was determined immediately to clear the house of Dame

Dame Caudle, whom he had suffered from inattention, and partly from ignorance, to remain so long in the house after Mary's delivery. He then thought himself master of the field, and that he could plead the late attack of Dame Caudle as a sufficient reason for removing Mary Staunton from his house, as soon as possible. With these magnanimous resolutions, one morning soon after the late fracas, he entered the room of Mary Staunton, without any previous notice.

CHAP. VI.

At his entrance, the scene so contrasted with the malignant passions and base disposition of Pursling, confused, even him, for a time. The child was sleeping and smiling on her lap, and Mary leant over it with the mixed look of pity and affection. Her voice was infinitely tender: and the following

ing lines, from a beautiful old ballad, which she was then repeating, disclosed the sentiments of her heart.

"Ly still, my darling, sleipe a while,
And when thou wakest sweitly smile;
But smile nat, as thy father did
To cozen maids: nay, God forbid!"

The unkind treatment of Pursling had driven from her hopes the promises which he had formerly made to her of marriage; and she felt now no confidence in his faith, and no consolation from his love, which had long been banished from his looks and action. Tears accompanied the completion of her song: and the visage of Pursling, furious and sullen, changed her melancholy into horror. "I will not have this brat any longer in my house," exclaimed Pursling, still smarting under the taunts of Dame Caudle. "It was born in your house," retorted Mary, with more than usual spirit. "It shall be sent to the Foundling Hospital to-morrow, for my neighbour Plume is a

subscriber, and—" "It is no foundling," said Mary, weeping very bitterly;—"it is mine; it is your's."—

"It shall quit my house, I say, woman, to whom ever it belongs," repeated Pursling, raising his voice from anger.

"I will then quit the house with it in my arms," replied Mary. "It shall not receive its nourishment from the breasts of a stranger; nor bestow its smiles on a face no way akin to him."

"I am not a-kin to him," ſaid Pursling, with a low and hesitating voice.

"I wiſh you were not," rejoined Mary, with a tone that alarmed Pursling.

Nature and passion are ever eloquent and energetic: Mary, for the first time in her life, felt that she was so; but her heart was ready to break with the painful sensations which

which this effort occasioned. For some minutes she sat in dignified silence; when rising suddenly from her chair, with the child in her arms, and casting a look at Pursling that withered up his soul, she flew with astonishing speed down the stairs, and as speedily departed from the house.

As this history is no romance, and introduces no monsters, but delineates human characters, we cannot assert that this conduct of Mary Staunton produced no unpleasant impressions in the mind of Jedediah Pursling. The circumstance of Mary taking away the child, as it was unexpected, it was impressive; for his own cold heart could not foresee the effects which were likely to act on a warm one, when unkindness was added to injury.

He heard, nevertheless, the sound of the street door, when it closed on the departure of Mary, with a pleasure much alloyed by shame and regret. He was pleased, as an

avaricious man, at the thoughts of the expences of the child being removed from him by this sudden fury of the mother! yet, as a father, he felt, to a certain degree, that he was a rascal both to the mother and son; for he never seriously believed that Mary was ever unfaithful to him. Her general good character, the solemn promiſe which he had made to her, seemed to plead in her favour, both on the point of integrity and interest. On further reflection, the valuable qualities of Mary, tried and applauded through many years, as housekeeper, cook, and nurse, brought in a train of recollections, of which his anger towards her for a time had suspended the remembrance. The many good qualities which ſhe discovered in her skill, industry, and strict punctuality, were now restored to his memory: The many nice dishes, capable of rousing the languid appetite, in the preparation of which she had diſplayed so much skill: The indefatigable attention with which she hovered over his couch, in real or imaginary illnesses; and,

more

more than all, the accuracy of her weekly accounts, now struck the mind of Pursling as for ever lost to him, by her sudden and passionate departure.

These melancholy meditations, which his self-love generated, pressed him with their unexpected load to the ground, and for the space of some minutes he shed tears of sincere sorrow and regret.

CHAP. VII.

WHILST Pursling passed many serious hours of that day in lamenting the loss of so good an housekeeper, nurse and cook, Mary, and her son had sought, and found a very friendly asylum in the house of a near neighbour,

Mrs Wigley, the wife of the late Moses Wigley, Esq. (Pursling's predecessor in W. street) was a woman of good disposition, elegant talents, and genteel education. She had entertained an uncommon friendship for Mary, during her husband's life-time, and would readily have taken her with her to her house in — street, had she not thought that her situation at Pursling's was in every respect more advantageous to her.—— Mrs. Wigley was always fond of reading, and having little of the company of her husband at his hours of leisure, who either employed it at some club, or if at home, consigned it to very constant and found afternoon naps, she became by habit very much attached to her little collection of books. At her vacant hours Mary used to read to her, and she received great delight from the clearness of her voice, and the melody of her pronunciation; this, with a similar taste for reading and reflection strongly attached Mary to Mrs. Wigley.

Thus

Thus being frequently together, and connected by the same pursuits, they contracted a very strong and sincere friendſhip for each other; and as, at the death of her husband, Mrs. Wigley occupied a house in a neighbouring street, they seldom passed a week without a call or a visit.

When Mary found that she was far advanced in her pregnancy, after some strong compunctions of sorrow and shame, she discovered her situation to Mrs. Wigley, and received comfort and promise of assistance, which her contrite manner and very melancholy situation, naturally excited in the tranquil and benevolent mind of her friend.

When Mary, with tones expressibly pathetic, lamented her connection with Pursling in the words of Jane Shore:

——"Name him no more!
"He was the bane and ruin of my peace.
"This anguish and these tears, these are the legacies
"His love has lent me."

she soothed her sorrows and dried up her tears, by repeating, with the kindest smile, and the most emphatic tone of voice, the answer of Alicia,

"My all is thine."

Mrs. Wigley knew too well the selfish and penurious temper of Pursling, to expect from him any alleviation of the sorrows, or any of the wants of her deluded friend, and had therefore frequently offered Mary her house as a home, whenever circumstances might induce her to seek this resource. These promises had supported Mary under the dreadful alarm of her approaching situation, had diminished the evil effects on her health and spirits, from the declining attentions of Pursling, and his final dislike and aversion.—Hence arose the spirit which she shewed in the last interview with Pursling, which astonished and appalled the magnanimous grocer.

On

On leaving his house, she immediately repaired to Mrs. Wigley's, where she received a welcome beyond her hopes. Mrs. Wigley had a considerable sum at her own disposal, and as her relations had taken offence at her marriage with Wigley, who was then beginning business, she had dropped all acquaintance with them, and considered herself as accountable to no one for the disposal of her money. The bulk of this she had determined in Mary's favour before she had quitted Pursling's house. She therefore received her friend with open arms, and immediately had a room prepared for her and the child; she repeated in the warmest manner, her former promises of continuing her friend through life, and also disclosed her intentions of extending her benevolence beyond that period.

CHAP. VIII.

PURSLING's mind now began to recover itself from the perturbation of losing his factotum, by the departure of Mary Staunton, when strange apprehensions came upon his mind about her destination; as he could not, after repeated attempts at conjecture, imagine in what place she had disposed of herself. Of Mrs. Wigley's friendship for Mary he was not ignorant; but that she should hold out an asylum to a young woman in her situation, he thought very unlikely. His own feelings accorded with the practice of the world, and illustrated very powerfully the general assertion of the poet:

"The wretched have no friends."

As

As he was totally unacquainted with the laws of his country, his conscience often suggested to him, that some very severe penalty hung over him for seducing the affections, and ruining the character of a young woman, and then turning her and her child out of doors by his harshneſs and ill treatment.

The perturbed spirit of Jedediah Pursling allowed him no repose; his nights were restless, and his dreams teemed with horrors. Sometimes he thought he was in a cart, by the side of two other murderers, fast approaching the fatal tree: at other times he heard the voice of the city crier proclaiming his conduct in the midst of the Royal Exchange, amidst the murmurs and shouts of the indignant multitude: and more frequently he saw two gigantic executors of the law carrying off his strong box, unbiassed by his threats, his prayers, or his lamentations.

After a night thus passed in these feverish symptoms of an evil conscience, and whilst he was endeavouring, by repeated cups of tea, to lower the burning palpitation of his heart, a note was delivered to him with the following contents:

"Send in my account immediately—you have forfeited all claim to my trust in your integrity: your conduct I shall represent to all my friends, and those of Mr. Wigley. Mary Staunton and your child I have taken under my protection.

"SARAH WIGLEY."

The perusal of this letter reminded him of some of his dreams; the denunciation contained in it seemed to be foretold, when in his slumbers he had heard the town crier publish his conduct. Mrs. Wigley's threats were not less formidable, as her connections, which were extensive, included his own. Alarmed at the idea of his shop being deserted, and also conscious

scious of having accumulated considerable sums of money by the concern, he now was determined to make a virtue of necessity, and to leave off business before business left off him. Thus resolved, he passed the following week in his counting-house, in writing out, in a fair hand, all the bills, with the contents of which he did not chuse that his clerks should be acquainted. Among the foremost in magnitude and antiquity of day, stood the account of the Duke of —— and square. This great personage Pursling never thought of troubling whilst he continued in business, for he had a mysterious awe of most men of high rank; and he gratified his vanity by retaining his Grace's name in his ledger, and by talking of his visit to — square; although on these occasions he seldom saw any body but the porter, or could claim familiarity with any individual on his Grace's establishment except the house dog. This animal being accustomed to the daily sight of snug and grave looking persons, in white wigs and brown cloaths, and seeing them come

come early and go away late, considered them as part of the family, and received them with great civility in the hall. The more jocose of these visitants called him the under porter; and as he was the only person in the house who would be civil without a fee, they held his Newfoundlandship in due estimation.

The resolution which Pursling had now taken of commencing gentleman, and retiring from business, had already inspired him with an uncommon share of boldness. Having written out his Grace's bill in very legible characters, especially the numerical figures; and having, on this occasion, changed his sober suit of brown *dittos*, the demure garb of commerce, for a more gay dress, he drove furiously towards — Square.

CHAP. IX.

PURSLING struck the door of a superb vestibule with a double rap: he adjusted his wig, the very best he had, by bringing it forwards on the ridge of his fiery proboscis: he surveyed his broad laced scarlet waistcoat with delight—he drew his pointed ruffles over his broad knuckles, and repeated the double knock. The echo from a large vaulted hall resounded in the ear of the affrighted Pursling: To dissipate his fear, he gave a loud hem—a new porter opened the door, and bowed to him with low reverence. Pursling felt his spirits revive, and began already to congratulate himself on his successful assumption of consequence. He marched upright into the hall, where he was met by Mr. Layton, his Grace's *gentleman*, whose

whoſe situation and duties, both in the house and out of it, were such that a more improper denomination could not have been assigned to him. He ſurveyed Pursling with very minute curiosity, and quickly discovered the identical grocer who had so often called at — square, soliciting further favours in his line.

"I wish to see his Grace, Mr. Layton, if you please;" said Pursling, in his usual humble manner and piano tone, to which he was recalled by the supercilious look, and inflexible aspect which the aforeſaid *gentleman* always exhibited in the presence of perſons of Pursling's deſcription. Pursling was following Layton into an inner hall, when that *gentleman*, with great ferocity of countenance, and in a very commanding sound of voice, called to the porter.. "You Sir, ſhew this man his place on *pennyless* bench."

Pursling followed the porter, and sat down on a long bench in the outer hall, which was nearly

nearly all pre-occupied by persons on a similar errand with Pursling, but whose patience seemed more exemplary, as their dress was more plain than that of Jedediah Pursling, Esq. As Pursling sat on that part of the bench which was near the inner hall, and had a view of the grand staircase, he beheld the well-known Fanny Lavender, the exact counterpart of Mr. Layton. Her situation and offices in the house, as his Grace was a bachelor, were of a nature at once multifarious, secret, and indefinite. Pursling had seen this *lady* frequently at his shop in — street, and many a tender glance did the amorous vender of figs cast on this fashionable female *friend* of his Grace, and many a valuable parcel did Fanny Lavender carry from his shop under the battery of her enchanting smiles, and condescending demeanour. This lady soon discovered her old friend Pursling, and, with a very affable look, and well-bred curtsey, approached her enamoured swain.

" Mr.

"Mr. Pursling, I think, of W— street!" "The same, madam; you are vastly correct, immensely polite," replied Pursling, elevating his squat figure to be on a level with the person whom he was addressing:— Fanny drew up too. The advantage was much on her side.

"Could I speak to his Grace for a moment?" asked Pursling with a faltering accent, at the same time putting a bank note of five pounds into the hand of Miss Lavender; adding, "my business will detain his Grace a very short time."

Fanny, with great dignity of manner, returned the note: "This compliment is unnecessary among old friends as we are, Mr. Pursling; if my Lord Duke is stirring, I will certainly announce your name immediately. Be so good as to take a chair." Saying this, Fanny Lavender ascended the ſtaircaſe with the lofty air and slow pace of a woman of fashion.

Fanny

Fanny Lavender was much beyond the middle height: ſhe was one of those wire-drawn figures which are called genteel by those persons who consider the beautiful *contour* of a swelling bosom, and a full and healthy plumpness, as very vulgar. Fanny had two large black eyes, of most bewitching ſplendor, the rays of which ſhe could ſo well manage, that they ſeldom failed to do execution on the object aimed at. When intereſt aſcertained their focus, the force was reſistleſs.

Purſling's red viſage flamed with their reflected light, and his ſighs kept pace with her ſmiles. He ſat down in a reverie—love and hope took full poſſeſſion of him. He recollected, with rapture, the ſweet voice of her addreſs; her ready complaiſance when ſhe heard his requeſt to ſee his Grace: and when he re-conſidered her deciſive refuſal of the note, his admiration of her bordered on aſtoniſhment. No woman in the city would have done this! no, in this part of the town money

money is looked upon as trash, and flies about like dust. Miss Lavender is certainly an extraordinary woman—a strong instance of generosity, or perhaps of love! Surely a woman who refuses money must either be in love, or she must be mad!"

This reverie of Pursling completely took up his whole powers of thinking, and he had placed her at the head of his table in his future villa, when the train of his enamoured thoughts was interrupted by the voice of his charmer.

"Mr. Pursling, be so good as to walk up:" Having said this, the lady flitted away into an adjacent apartment, and left this incipient Esq. to the direction of a French Abbé.

CHAP. X.

"BE your name Monsieur Pursling," said the Abbé, bowing very low.

"My name is not Monseur," replied Pursling, very angrily, with a growl not unlike that of a mastiff when you approach him at the time of his knawing a bone.

"*Peut-être* Chevalier Pursling."

"I am Jedediah Pursling, of W—— street."

"Oh, his Grace will be quite ravished to see you! He talk much of you and your much politesse."

Pursling grew milder—"His Grace," continued the Abbé, "desired me to shew you

you his gallery of statues and pictures; for his Grace has much *virtù*. He has been at Paris, at Rome, and at Florence: He possesses de Greek, de Roman statue, all original. He spare no expence; quite an Engliſh nobleman in expence and love of de arts. I will ſhew de Apollo Belvidere, de Venus de Medicis, de Hercules Farnese, de Meleager, de Antonine, all originals, in fine plaiſter of Paris."

This torrent of words, the eagerness of look with which their utterance was attended, together with the subjects with which Purſling was totally unacquainted, gave the retiring grocer the appearance of one lost in admiration. The Abbé thought it a compliment to his learning, and was beginning to utter ſome sentences of bad Latin, when Purſling stopped him short.

"Why, Mr. what do you call yourself, what with your gabbling, and with the uncivil treatment of the other gentleman below-stairs,

ſtairs, I ſhall be here all day without ſeeing his Grace: I ſhall loſe the Exchange, and not get home by dinner time."

The Abbé ſhrugg'd up his ſhoulders, and ſhowing Purſling into a drawing room, and promiſing that his Grace would ſoon arrive, he left him with many ſtrange grimaces, and the word '*tramontain*,' was very audibly pronounced.

Purſling rejoiced at his departure, puzzled that a perſon ſo well dreſſed, and of ſo faſhionable an appearance, ſhould be one of his Grace's ſervants; nor was he leſs at a loſs to know to what amuſement he ſo graciouſly had invited him. This polite gentleman was another non-deſcript attendant on his Grace: His wonderful attention to his Grace's humours, however inconſtant and whimſical; his inexhauſtable vivacity, and his readineſs to talk on all ſubjects, made him a very indiſpenſable perſon in his Grace's houſe. He could ſing or fiddle to his

his Grace's company, whenever the wine took away the powers of conversation. He could make up fashionable medicines; construct easy chairs; line commodes; and in short, never thought on any subject different from his Grace; or put difficulty in the way of any job on which his Grace might think proper to employ him.

In the capacity of a connoisseur, he was sent to Pursling to endeavour to amuse him, till his Grace thought proper to approach.—He returned with a long face, with a very violent shrug of the shoulders, and a most malignant grin, told his Grace that Mons. Pursling was *très bizarre*.

" He has never been at Paris, Mons. Abbè," said his Grace, with a grave face.

" Oh, never at Paris!" exclaimed the Abbè; " then I do not wonder he be so *mal habile*."

" *Apropos*,

"*Apropos*, Mons. Abbè," ſaid the Duke, "I will leave you to adjuſt my ſword-knot in your beſt *goût*, and I will go and wait upon this *etourdi*."

Though Purſling had paſſed by ſome very fine ſtatues on the ſtaircaſe, much ſuperior to the *original ones* boaſted by the Abbè and made of plaiſter of Paris, and his own purchaſing; yet when Purſling entered the drawing room, his eyes were rivetted on ſome large pictures in the moſt ſuperb frames. The glaring ſplendor of their colours; the very lively attitudes of all the figures; and particularly the nature of the ſubjects, had long held the imagination of the amorous grocer, 'in moſt unholy dalliance.'——These ſtories and characters were taken from the fables of ancient Greece and Rome, their figures were in perfect nakedneſs, from Jupiter the thunderer to a Silenus; the vivacity with which the colours of painting exhibit the beauties of the human form, ſtruck the unlearned eye of Purſling with aſtoniſhment and delight.

A picture of Jupiter and Leda, which hung over the fire place; and another of Tarquin and Lucrece, which hung directly oppoſite to him as he ſat on the ſofa, chain'd up all his faculties in wonder and amazement. Whilſt the enraptured groçer was employed on the ſpecimens of the Abbè's taſte and his grace's peculiar diſpoſition, a ſlow ſolemn footing along the gallery anounced the approach of the Duke; the lofty door opening wide, diſcovered the maſter of this ſuperb manſion.

CHAP. XI.

HIS grace with difficulty ſuppreſſing a ſmile, which had commenced at obſerving, on his entrance, the open mouth, and far extended eyes of this ſingular connoiſſeur, approached Purſling with the freedom and eaſe of an old acquaintance.

"Come, Purſling, ſet down, I am glad to ſee you in — ſquare. I rejoice, Mr. Purſling," ſaid his grace, "that my houſe ſteward has ſo wiſely acted, in connecting me with ſo ſubſtantial a perſon in the city, as I underſtand you to be. Men of your ſolid reſpectability are very ſerviceable to men of rank: Your dealings are on a large ſcale; and the feelings of your friends are never hurt by advertiſements of your ſuddenly

leaving off buſineſs.—There is great pleaſure, you may imagine, Mr. Purſling," added his grace, " that when a nobleman's name is in the books of men like you, there is no fear of an account being ſent to him before he indulges himſelf in the pleaſure of aſking for it: The hours of a man of faſhion are not interrupted by unſeaſonable occupations of balancing paltry ſums; nor are petitions rudely thruſt into his hands; or demands made on him by the impertinent and uncivil letters of attornies—perſons with whom, I truſt, men of your character ſcorn at all times, and on all occaſions, to be connected."

His Grace was encouraged in his loquacity by the profound ſilence and complaiſance which the countenance and geſtures of Purſling exhibited, during this diſplay of his Grace's honeyed eloquence.

Purſling not expecting ſo much perſonal civility, nor imagining that a man of his Grace's

Grace's rank could or would deſcribe his buſineſs and ſituation in ſuch flattering terms, bow'd and ſmiled an hundred times during this polite harrangue.

His Grace proceeded with undiminiſhed volubility: "You may be, perhaps, ſurprized, Mr. Purſling, that I ſhould be ſo well acquainted with the particulars of your character," obſerved his Grace, with a moſt condeſcending ſmile; "but my information comes from a quarter on which I can depend. Fanny Lavender has ſome time ſince informed me, that you was a man of wealth, induſtry, and patience; and that moreover, you was poſſeſſed with a due regard to your ſuperiors in rank."

Purſling made one of the loweſt of his bows.

"She likewiſe informed me, Mr. Purſling, that you was a bachelor, and without any incumbrances of family."

Purſling ſuppreſſed, as far as he could, his evident confuſion at the laſt part of his ſpeech. His Grace went on with ſeeming inattention to this circumſtance.

"Of ſuch a perſon as Fanny deſcribed, I was of courſe very deſirous of being the friend, and of being intimately acquainted with; and our connexion Mr. Purſling has continued theſe five years, as I flatter myſelf, with mutual ſatisfaction."

"Fifteen years, your Grace means," ſays Purſling, ſomewhat eagerly and drily, and was about to have recourſe to his pocket-book, to aſcertain by the bill his chronological accuracy."

"Do not give yourſelf any trouble, Mr. Purſling, about the preciſe time; perhaps I have made a trifling miſtake, for time paſſes very quickly when it paſſes agreeably. This obſervation" added his Grace, with increaſed vivacity, "reminds me of an over-

ſight

ſight towards you, Purſling; perhaps more time may have paſſed than I am aware of, ſince your breakfaſt. Give me leave to ring for ſome chocolate and cold meat."

Purſling, who, from the anxiety which this intended viſit occaſioned, made a very ſparing breakfaſt this morning, would readily have choſen the more ſolid viands, but thinking chocolate a more genteel repaſt at that time of day, ſuppreſſed the uſual craving of his appetite, exclaiming, with awkward vivacity, "I ſhall be proud to be of your Grace's party," and took up, with his broad hand, a ſmall cup of chocolate, and a wafer cake. His Grace excuſed himſelf from joining his gueſt, by pleading his late breakfaſt.

Purſling was now engaged in the delicate taſk of drinking burning hot chocolate in the preſence of a Duke. He dared not place the foaming meſs on any of the tables that were cloſe to him, as their highly poliſhed, and beautifully painted ſurfaces, de-

clared them objects of ſhow, and indignant of any weight. Urged by hunger, cramped by etiquette, and inflamed by curioſity to hear the concluſion of his Grace's ſpeech, Purſling ſat in the moſt uneaſy ſituation of mind and body. His Grace proceeded with the utmoſt tranquillity with regard to both. "Fanny Lavender, Mr. Purſling, is a diſtant relation of mine."

Purſling placed very awkwardly his fingers in the hot beverage. His Grace ſmiled, and went on: "Her mother married very young and very imprudently; of courſe ſhe was neglected by my father, and her other powerful relations, and died, after the birth of her firſt child, of pride and poverty. But as Fanny, her daughter, was not anſwerable for her mother's indiſcretion, ſhe has received a very good education, and had I married and begotten children, I meant to place her as governeſs to them: But as the fear of having children who might be my maſters when I was grown old, prevented me

me from thinking of ſettling myſelf in that ſtate, at a certain time Fanny became my houſekeeper and ——"

His Grace here was ſeized with a violent fit of coughing, a common circumſtance when the nature of the ſubject induced him to talk more than uſual—he took a lozenge, and went on, not heeding the interruption of Purſling, who hoped that his Grace had not had that cold long; that he greatly apprehended it might diſagree with his Grace's lungs; that he could recommend to his Grace a friend and neighbour of his, who dealt in lozenges, which he might venture to ſay would ſtop his Grace's coughing on all occaſions whatever.

"Fanny," added his Grace, "has been ſo faithful to me in the diſcharge of her various duties and employments, that I ſhould be vaſtly happy to ſee her married to ſome ſubſtantial perſon in trade, that she might not throw herſelf away

as her mother did. Theſe hopes I began to indulge might not be improbable, when I ſo often heard her talk of you; and as you know, Mr. Purſling," ſaid his Grace ſomewhat jocularly, "a woman never talks much of a man ſhe neither loves nor hates. I can aſſure you Fanny has been much your friend on many occaſions."

Purſling, during this ſpeech, felt himſelf all rapture. To be married to a relation of a lord! and that a woman for whom he had already conceived a great partiality, were ideas too powerful for the ſenſorium of the ambitious and amorous vender of ſouchong. Riſing in a hurry to thank his Grace for his kindneſs and condeſcenſion, he threw the ſcarcely taſted chocolate on the magnificent table which ſtood between them. Purſling's confuſion could only be equalled by his Grace's calmneſs and politeneſs, who led the ſtammering Purſling to the door of the room, and ſeeing the grocer wiſh to depart, ſaid, with great vivacity, "Purſling, good morning;

morning; you will remember our converſation."

"My lord, my lord, I ſhall never forget your Grace's favours;" uttered the inarticulate lover, and left the houſe with the utmoſt haſte, embarraſſment, and delight.

CHAP. XII.

HIS Grace, though a man of mean talents, had all the cunning which perſons of his deſcription ſo aſſiduouſly cultivate. This faculty was ſet off by an elegant perſon, and an addreſs that was peculiarly engaging.

'He seem'd
For dignity compos'd, and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow: though his tongue
Dropt manna.'

His Grace returned to his library with no less pleasure arising from the interview than the grocer felt on retiring to his counting house. His Grace was much pleased with the apparent success of the negociation, and had seen the pocket-book replaced by Pursling with uncommon satisfaction, as was related in the last chapter. On the other hand, Pursling was overjoyed at the prospect of a marriage with Miss Lavender, a lady so tall, so accomplished, and so nobly descended.

Though the love of money is strong, yet ambition and love are much stronger, and Pursling for many days forgot his errand to —— square: Fanny Lavender had found, for some time, her influence with his Grace considerably diminish; nor had his Grace been very cautious of exhibiting, by cool looks and warm words, his declining attachment. During some of these amatory quarrels, when some remaining embers were yet alive, Fanny used to endeavour to set them on flame by mentioning the kind attentions

of

of Pursling to her, and enumerated his wealth, and other good qualities.

Not many days previous to the interview between his Grace and Pursling, the former had said to Fanny, that he imagined, nay, that he hoped that she still kept on good terms with the rich grocer and tea dealer in —— street.

"You can, on this occasion, my lord, be of infinite service to me," replied Fanny.

"How, Lavender?" replied his Grace.

"Why, my lord, when Pursling comes with his bill, (for come he will shortly, as his account is of very long standing, and very large,) be so good as to admit him to your Grace's presence—introduce my name as a particular friend to his interests, and hint that I am a distant relation to your Grace's family. This will at once flatter the pride, and lull to sleep the avarice of this

this gallant and wealthy spark. You know, my lord," added Fanny, with more than usual earnestness of manner, " that though my mother lived in great obscurity and distress, she was no very distant relation of your Grace's."

" I will consider of this matter," replied his Grace, very drily; " and, Lavender, for the present you may retire."

Some parts of the speech just delivered by Miss Lavender was by no means pleasing to his Grace. The long account due to Pursling had given him some thoughts of a serious nature; for, with all his pomp and ostentation, some regard to economy was attended to both by necessity and inclination, which yet was not always alive through a defect in his memory. Indeed, his Grace might be said to have lost half of his memory, for though he sometimes forgot to pay others, he was very regular in his demands on his tenants. His Grace's rent-roll had

more

more of sound than reality: His father, from a foolish pride, had much increased it by buying land, and leaving the purchase money as a mortgage on the estate. His Grace had further involved himself in debt by a love of politics, which he displayed by borough jobbing, and persuading others to be of his party by very prevailing reasons, which left his purse always in a very light state: Nor was he much pleased to find that Miss Lavender knew of her relationship to him, as he had vainly hoped since her mother died when she was very young, that this family annecdote had remained a secret to all but himself. But the view of providing soon for Miss Lavender in a way so little productive of expence to himself, and at the same time of protracting the demands of Pursling to some distant period, occasioned his Grace to comply with the demands of Fanny, and to hold the very polite conference with Fanny's opulent admirer which we have so fully related.

After

After very little reflection, his Grace resolved to have another and speedy conversation with Fanny, and to remove all obstacles to her marriage with Pursling. Miss Lavender complied readily with all his Grace's stipulations, and promised the utmost deference to her noble relation's commands.

Fanny was very glad to quit his Grace, from whose generosity she had received little, and whose cold temper and haughty manners little accorded with his tender professions. All the money she could accumulate in her various employments were not the effect of his Grace's munificence, or the produce of her smiles; but the more ample and certain gains which she could command as housekeeper, by collusion with the various tradesmen of his Grace. These perquisites enabled Fanny Lavender to have her little coteries, and if gossip fame did not lie, to indulge herself in some tender connections. Having a thorough knowledge of his

Grace's disposition and character, she had early been taught to pay strict attention to the main chance, against a rainy day. She was now turned of thirty; her glass, sometimes, and his Grace's behaviour not unfrequently of late, had told her that it was high time to look out for a settlement for life. She had long had in her eye the sober and thriving tea dealer in W—— street, and had made as many advances as she thought likely to be successful, and with as much advantage as the dull apprehension, and cautious temper of Pursling would permit her to acquire.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN people are in earnest either on the business of marrying, or fighting, a challenge is soon given and as readily accepted.

A few days after the above conversation between his Grace and Fanny, the latter received a very small letter, with a very flourishing superscription, which she knew to be the hand-writing of Pursling. The contents were written in the brevity of the mercantile style.

" Madam,

" Be so good as to honour the inclosed draught on you, and to fill up the spaces, and endorse it.

" *I pro-*

"*I promise to marry Miss Lavender, of* —— *square, on day of* 179—

JEDEDIAH PURSLING."

Wood-street,
June, 17, 1794.

Fanny returned the draught with her acceptance annexed, and filled up the spaces with an early day. Pursling had added, by way of P. S. to his letter, that in hopes of marrying so genteel a lady as Miss Lavender, he should soon transfer his business in W— street to his two nephews, and that he had taken a house in the neighbourhood of London, and that he did not doubt that her society would pay him with *interest* all the monies he might expend on this new firm.

This gallant letter was very agreeable to Miss Lavender, as she was determined to be as little cruel as the laws of decorum would permit; knowing full well that at a certain age ladies act neither pleasantly nor wisely to keep their lovers at bay.

The

The circumstance of Pursling's intention to retire from business, was gratifying to that uncommon share of pride that falls to the lot of the remote branches of an illustrious family.

Fanny hastened, with much joy in her countenance, to lay the contents of Purslings epistle before her noble counsellor; who, on reading the poſtscript, exhibited a face of great embarrassment and solicitude.

"Do any of the contents displease your lordship," exclaimed the astonished Fanny.

"This Pursling, I see, is going to leave off business."

"He is very rich;" replied Fanny.

"But he may be troublesome in making his demands; or he may employ persons less respectful in their mode of application; in fact,

fact, I am not prepared at present—that is, I—Well, added his Grace, rather more fluently, you may inform Pursling, that when he is more at leisure to attend than he is at present, or may be for some time to come, that my steward will write to him on these matters. I have only to add, Fanny, I wish you joy on your intended nuptials; and congratulate you on the great prudence you have shewn in this connection, by choosing a man whose situation will preserve you from those inconveniences which your mother experienced by a love match."

"Tho' his Grace could talk thus knowingly on the prudence of marrying a situation, rather than the person, yet some years back nature had suggested a very different theory. A very pretty woman, though his inferior in rank, yet of a very respectable extraction, had so far an influence over his imagination, that had the lady been as kind as his Grace was amorous, another very imprudent match might have taken place in his Grace's

Grace's family. A pre-engagement to a person of her own rank, and with whom she had long been acquainted, rendered Letitia Woodbine deaf to the persuasions of her prudent friends, who urged her night and day to become a dutchess.

This want of success rendered his Grace averse from matrimony, and failing in this principal object of every man's mind, he exchanged love for ambition and an insatiable wish for political power. The immense sums which he expended to return his own members; the harrassing poverty which this conduct produced; and the many acts of ingratitude and fraud, by which his political friends had frequently made him suffer in interest and reputation, could not cure his Grace of that

——— "Parliamentering itch,
That does unwary knights so oft bewitch."

This trait of pride and folly which "rul'd each hour" of his Grace's life, made the probable

probable demand of Pursling very vexatious to the Duke, and would have done so at any other period of his existence.

Fanny seeing the Duke not inclined to any further conversation, made a low curtsey to him, and took her leave of him; which he returned by a sullen nod of the head, and a countenance of perfect indifference. His Grace's former attention to Fanny could never be called love; and when Fanny was no longer young, his Grace felt the truth of the following stanza in a beautiful old sonnet.

"Hee that loves a rosie cheeke,
Or a coral lip admires;
Or from star-like eyes doth seeke
Fuel to maintaine his fires;
As old time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away."

CHAP.

CHAP XIV.

DURING the time intervening, between his settling his affairs in London and his retiring into the country, Pursling commenced a career of pleasure and gaiety. Near a fortnight subsequent to his marriage, he wished to shew his lady his taste for polite entertainments.

At a play he had been but once in his life: of an opera or concert he had so little notion, that his ideas on the subject were very indistinct; and with the usual conduct of ignorance, he condemned vehemently what he did not understand. In his present happy condition, he was determined to lay aside his inveterate prejudices, and to escort his lady to the opera.

Pursling

Pursling's notions of music were just as clear and proper as his idea of dress appeared to be; but as he was obstinate in every thing, no person could persuade him that he was not always well dressed. Whether Pursling took his plan of blending colours, from contemplating an harlequin's jacket, or was smitten at once with all the patterns of his taylor's scroll, it cannot be easily determined: Black, scarlet, blue and green, were his favourite colours, and the various parts of his dress rung the changes. His most settled dress was a green coat, a red waistcoat, a black silk pair of breeches, and worsted hose of all colours; which mixture, together with a very white wig and purple face, assuming, or rather always possessing great gravity, made Pursling a very distinguished figure at all public places.—Nor was his conduct less conspicuously absurd when there: At operas he snor'd most profoundly, or grumbled very audibly; but at a pantomime his mirth was so boisterous, and his symptoms of approbation so loud,

that the well-bred nerves of his bride were thereby most grievously assailed.

At one scene in a pantomime, where harlequin is pursuing columbine into a hatter's shop, he is seized by one of the workmen and flung into a boiling cauldron, and in a second he crawls out again under the figure of a large well boiled lobster This unexpected manœuvre, so tickled the fancy of the gormandizing Pursling, and he laughed so immoderately, that quite forgetting there was no back to his seat, he fell between the two persons behind him on the ground, and exhibited, by his struggling hands and feet, and his short neck quite buried in his cravat, a very striking representation of his great favourite, a lively turtle.

His tumble alarmed Mrs. Pursling, whose fears were encreased by seeing his face grow black every moment, and his gaspings for breath every moment more intense. With the assistance of some persons near her, Pursling

sling was carried home in a coach, and having undergone a copious bleeding, was immediately put to bed.

The next morning he arose in great spirits, and declared he never saw so fine a lobster as that at Sadler's wells, and boil'd to a turn; adding, he believed, upon his credit, as he had gone to bed without supper, that he could eat one claw of it, and some of the tail for breakfast.

As all public places were long since familiar to Mrs. Pursling; and as she strongly suspected that she had a considerable share in the whispers and ridicule of those around her, so liberally bestowed on her companion; she was very unwilling to delay their departure from London by amusement so irksome to herself, and when, in all probability, another droll pantomime might completely choak her dear Mr. Pursling.

On her expressing one afternoon her unwillingness to join a party which he had proposed, he stared with a most ludicrous degree of astonishment, exclaiming with equal wonder and delight, " Why, zounds, Madam, I thought women, especially ladies, were never tired of gadding abroad. To tell you the truth, Madam, I was in hopes, as we are going to live in the country, to make you ſick of the town; and so I went from one strange place to another, on purpose that you might be wearied out. For I do not understand any of them there places for my part. Your operas are outlandish; your comedies full of coxcombs and strumpets; and as for tragedies, which you, Madam, are so fond of, I hates them; why, their whining puts me in mind of beggars in my own parish when I was churchwarden,—some of them cried, forsooth, and others ranted and raved; and that does very well for such kind of folks; but ladies and gen-'emen, such as these tragedies show us, ›uld know better; and if ladies and gentlemen

tlemen did reduce themselves to poverty, and such like, they ought not to trouble strangers with their speechifying about their distresses."

Whilst Pursling was proceeding with the fluency of an orator, and the bitterness of a critic, against the stock of public amusements, Mrs. Pursling sit in contented silence, which she broke in due time, by saying,—She was very willing to leave town when it best suited his time, and the sooner the better; as town was hideous to her always in the summer, as she had never been used to it, but always resided at a cassino of his Grace, seven miles from London, in a very charming country, which she began to describe with the taste of a Gilpin or a Repton, when Pursling asked, if she thought they could find a house in that neighbourhood: Mrs. Pursling replied, she would apply to the gardener's wife, who resided always at the cassino.

This matter being put into a train, Pursling made over the good will of his shop in W— street to his two nephews, Harry and John Ledger, for a valuable consideration. Pursling thought it inconsistent with his long experience in business, and the relationship by which he was connected with the Ledgers, to withhold his advice to these young men, on their assuming such an important concern as the conduct of the shop of the late Jedediah Pursling, grocer and tea-dealer.

As the Ledgers laughed at the folly of some of the maxims, and despised the cunning of the others, we will not load our pages with a recital so little likely to please and instruct. All the edification which the Ledgers could pick up from the unconnected harrangue of their uncle was, that if to the diligence which he had exerted in trade, he had annexed more liberality, knowledge and integrity, he would have retired with three fourths more wealth than he had collected

lected by parsimony, cunning, and ceaseless anxiety.

John Ledger, the younger, had often observed the very sad looks of his uncle when he met him coming from the Exchange, and in the light state of his own heart, he used to repeat the words of Gratiano,

"You look not well, ſeignior Antonio,
You have too much reſpect upon the world;
They loſe it, that do buy it with much coſt."

CHAP. XV.

A letter arrived from Mrs. Scion, the gardener's wife, to whom Mrs. Pursling had written, informing her that a large house was vacant, and that it was very charming and rural, as no building stood before it, but the stables belonging to it; and that they were in the gothic stile.

Mr. and Mrs. Pursling, after having surveyed the premises, and foreseeing, with the "prophetic eye of taste," what remained to make it a very elegant villa, they staid only in town till the neceſſary repairs could be completed, and then took poſſession of their mansion, in the village of ——. This village, like many other in the vicinity of London, might be called a small town, except

cept that the circumstance of having no market place excluded it from that title.—The generality of the houses were built in a row, in the same manner as the streets in London; and the small slips of ground behind them, partitioned by walls regular in height and length, gave these pleasure grounds, view'd sideways, very much the appearance of a sheep market.

The mansion of Jedediah Pursling, Esq. was distinguished by its insular situation; and an alehouse within an hundred yards of it did not encroach, by any of its buildings, on the solitary dignity of Pagoda-lodge; a title which Mrs. Pursling had given it, in consequence of a Chinese bridge behind it, and a Chinese railing which guarded its front. Behind the mansion near half an acre of meadow land, and a stream of water, narrow and muddy, gave an air of the country, and determined the choice of madam and her spouse.

It is true, the pellucid rivulet was described as capable of lulling the cares of the retiring merchant; and the extensive and ever verdant lawn invited the footsteps of the admirer of nature:—So said the advertisement of the eloquent and ingenious auctioneer, to whom the sale of this truly romantic villa had been consigned.

Mrs. Pursling had been referred to this advertisement, by Mrs. Scion, the gardener's wife, residing at the Cassino; and she had perused it with rapture, and meditated on it with delight, whilst her husband was calculating the expences which it might probably lead him into; and the pleasures of his lucubrations by no means accorded with his lady's reveries. The latter never imagined that the perpetual verdure of the lawn continued only three months in the year; and the rivulet was scarcely seen to flow except after a heavy shower of rain.

The

The front of the house stood close to a public road from London; but this was a circumstance neither disagreeable to Pursling or his lady. The consideration that the stage coach might occasionally drop some fish, or a tureen of turtle soup at his very door, was highly pleasing to Mr. Pursling. On the other hand, his lady was delighted with the thoughts of taking her work-bag close to the parlour window, where so many objects might alleviate the want of conversation in her good man, and furnish her own mind with some ideas from without.

Jedediah Pursling, Esq. had scarcely resided at Pagoda-lodge half a year, before he felt a void in his mind, which neither the quality of his understanding, or the scarcity of his acquirements had enabled him to fill up. The Chinese bridge was finished, and had even tumbled down, and been repaired; the leaden statues of Pagan deities still filled the eye of the spectator with amazement, through the vistos of the rising plantation,

and remained still in undiminished majesty.—The stream had not as yet overflowed his flower-besprinkled banks, or made its way into the cellar: Pursling had as yet heard of no prosecution entered against him for his tame deer breaking into his neighbour's orchard—nor had he yet himself filed a bill against any person for stealing away the leg and thigh of a Venus, or detected any one in the daring attempt of wresting the thunder-bolts from the right hand of Jupiter—all things were yet in their proper places. The stream continued to visit very civilly, under the arch newly turned for its reception, and paid hitherto a daily visit to its new acquaintance.

The windows of the house were all completed with pointed arches, to correspond with the stables; their frames were ornamented with blossom coloured green frames and blinds, and the spirit of virtù laid dormant in the bosom of Pursling and his fair consort; and his Sunday visitors rested from

from the labours of walking his grounds, and commending additions as improvements.

Mrs. Pursling had, indeed, no further interfered in the embellishments of Pagoda Lodge than to beg that the large front door might be painted of a pink colour. Examining the bills of his workmen, taxing and paying them, succeeded to watching their motions, and scolding at their inattentions. These employments, as they bore the stamp of something like business, employed for some time, the mind of Pursling very agreeably.

These difficulties being conquered, Pursling, like Alexander the Great, sighed for a new creation; or, if the gravity of our history disdained not a quibble, we might more properly say, of a new re-creation. What would at this period have filled the "aching void" of Pursling's extensive mind, it would be in vain to conjecture, as he had not yet paid any visits to his neighbours, nor recovered

covered from the shock of the late expences, when an event not indeed unexpected, invaded every corner of it.

CHAP. XVI.

MADAM Pursling was in all due form and ceremony delivered of a son and heir: The nurses congratulated the lady on the easy time which she had, with God's blessing, experienced, since women in general, at her time of life are oftentimes in great danger from their *first* child. At the latter part of this sentence conscience raised up a faint blush in the pale and thin countenance of Mrs. Pursling—it was transient, and soon succeeded by a very significant smile.

In

In due time Jedediah Pursling, Esq. was introduced to his son and heir, and long-suffering wife. After a prodigious likeness both to the father and mother had been unanimously declared, and great acuteness of understanding uniformly asserted to be discernible at first sight in the child's countenance, and the beautiful features of the sweet creature as highly extolled, the parents began very gravely to debate on his future destination. The mother wished him to be a soldier—Pursling shook his head very violently. The controversy was carrying on with more vehemence than the nature of the question, in the present stage, or the exiſtent state of the lady's nerves would permit, when Dr. Tonic's approach in his chariot was announced; and, on his steps being heard on the staircase, the nurses, with conjoint fury, hurried Pursling out of the room, whose vehement gestures and loud voice would have denounced to the doctor the little care the aforesaid nurses

nurses were bestowing on their patient's convalescent condition.

Dr. Tonic (for so the courtesy of the country people stiles any person who has pierced a vein, mixed a drug, or cured a widow,) was surgeon, apothecary, and midwife. Neither his professional skill, nor his hereditary shop had placed the doctor in his present affluent circumstances. A good person—a modest appearance, and an excellent genius for reporting and making stories of a certain scandalous nature, had introduced him to the company and good graces of a wealthy widow.

Mrs. Sophronia Simper had, in her youth, married an old man by the advice of her friends, in the sweet hope at his death of marrying a young one by her own choice. His will very soon put her in that situation: Having no children to take care of, except that her husband might be called so, from his helpless state of body and mind,

she

she had contracted, from mere idleness, the love of taking physic, fancying herself ill, and plaguing every one with her contradictory reports. What began in fancy ended in reality; in a very feeble state of mind and body, she took a house in the village of ——, and soon became acquainted with the apothecary of the place, a person to whom she could unfold her indispositions, and ensure an audience.

The vivacity of Dr. Tonic's talk—his comical anecdotes, true and false, with which it abounded, and the unembarrassed appearance of his address, induced the widow to call in his advice whenever the vapours attacked her. At this time, Tonic was handsome, lively, and younger than herself. His mind, indeed, little corresponded with his figure; the former was selfish, illiterate, profligate, and tyrannical, and the slave of passion and whim. His former wife had fell a sacrifice to his ill usage: But neither this account, nor various others tending to

hold

hold up Tonic to just contempt and hatred, had any power over the widow Simper. The lady found the truth of the facetious bard's representation,

> " Love is a burglarer, and felon
> That at the window eye does steal in
> To rob the heart."

When she consigned her person and forty thousand pounds into the hands of Tonic, the doctor felt likewise—the case in point so well reported by the same merry bard: He knew

> " What tender sigh, and trickling tear,
> Longs for a thousand pounds a year,
> And languishing transports are fond
> Of statute, mortgage, bill, and bond."

This prudent match on the doctor's side, preserved him from a jail to which his former bad conduct was consequently leading him, to the utter ruin of himself and two daughters. But such is the world's folly, (to use a mild

a mild term,) Tonic, on this access of wealth, was restored to public favour. Thus reinstated in his business, and proud of his conquest of a rich widow, he again gave way to his natural turn for licentious talk and behaviour.

On popular subjects of love, Tonic's imagination was ever inflammable, and sported in double entendres, and in a variety of grotesque imagery, which nothing but the most inveterate practice could have attained, or the most nauseous fancy could have generated. But the contagion of his conversation and behaviour was now kept under by the total extinction of his external graces. "Setting on benches in an afternoon, and unbuttoning," had rendered the form of Tonic ludicrously unwieldy. The person that led the widow's heart "into willing bondage," was totally metamorphosed: "The lightning of his eyes, and thunder of his beak," was extinguished by overgrown eyebrows, and a bloated visage; and his smiles were rendered hideous

hideous by the few remaining and shattered teeth which gluttony and carelessness had left in the mouth of this profound professor of medicine.

The strange figure of the doctor, who assumed much youthfulness of manner, raised a smile in the face of Mrs. Pursling: The doctor's assurance construed it into one of approbation. Though Tonic knew that another person was employed by the family, yet this was a visit he thought proper to make, because he thought no rival could stand in the way of a man of his consequence.

Tonic approached near to Mrs. Pursling —on making his bow, he perceived features no strangers to his recollection. The smart and coquettish manner with which Mrs. Pursling received his address, confirmed him. Tonic enquired of the Duke of ——, saying he had not seen him for some years at the Cassino.

Mrs.

Mrs. Pursling talked familiarly about his Grace; but her vivacity immediately vanished, when Tonic, with a look of saucy familiarity, asked Mrs. Pursling whether she had heard of Mr. Chip's marriage. "Chip, you must know, is a cousin of mine by marriage, and many a merry story has Chip told about the family in —— square: But Chip is a sad faithless swain, though he is an old friend of mine; and I hope my cousin Jenny Brawn will pay him off for old scores, and keep him in good order; for Jenny has a violent spirit, a loud voice, and a strong muscular well-set person."

This discourse, so little like the former, about dukes, &c. quite disconcerted Mrs. Pursling: and fearing the volubility of Tonic's tongue, as she knew his character, she pretended indisposition, and Tonic was dismissed with as little ceremony as Pursling had been before; and the servant who had led him up stairs, was soundly rated by the nurses,

nurses, whose intereſt the family doctor kept up, by a generosity which Tonic was never known to display.

CHAP. XVII.

IT will now be necessary to relate the cause of Mrs. Pursling's indisposition, as recorded in the last chapter. It will not be improper likewise to mention some circumſtances of the short courtship of Jedediah Pursling, and Frances Lavender, spinster.

Very soon after the gracious conversation with the duke of —, Pursling waited on his fair friend, but much too early for her hour of rising: Miss Lavender hurried down stairs, on Mr. Pursling's name being announced to her, though she had been in bed but a few hours. The prim and precise dress of Purling, formed a very striking contrast to the careless

careless and not very decent dishabille of Miss Lavender.

Fanny had once been a beauty, though rather too tall, which circumstance, in the eye of Pursling, was a great recommendation, for he himself was very much below the ſtandard which a serjeant would have required in a recruit. In breadth and roundness Mr Pursling made up with square inches what he lost by perpendicular height. Had Pursling in his youth been rolled out by proper exercises, been an active man, lived at the west end of the town, and led the life of his opulent and fashionable neighbours, he would have been as tall, thin, and genteel as any young man in the purlieus of Bond-street.

Mr. Pursling certainly had materials to be so drawn out; but he had no volatile spirits, nothing about him that would sublimate! all sunk downwards and form'd a cubic mass. Fanny, on the contrary, had immense

immense volatility, a vast fund of spirits, always mounting upwards: It is a wonder, that on these principles, ſhe was not much taller.

From a milliners ſhop, the place of her education, ſhe had early in life been transferred into the ſervice of a man of faſhion, and imitated as much as ſhe could the gaieties of thoſe around her. Fanny had from her infancy been tinctured with a love for the genteel, and a life of ſtyle. Her father, a man of ſmall fortune, had been educated at one of our great ſchools, where he had contracted an acquaintance with young men of fortune and faſhion. Being a boy of ſome talents, though of little judgment and great vanity, he courted the ſociety of perſons of the above deſcription with great aſſiduity; and his hopes and his vanity were flattered and indulged by the notice they took of him. Marrying early in life a woman of high blood, but ſmall fortune, he had the preſumption and folly to aim at the continuance of his

ſchool

school friendships: This imprudent conduct soon led him towards the door of a jail, upbraided by his equals for his pride, and ridiculed by his superiors for his presumption.

His wife, a woman of spirit, underſtanding and sensibility, had frequently endeavoured to check his expences, and by gentle and wholesome counsels to show him the imprudence of his conduct, and the fallacy of his hopes of continuing these connections with any advantage to himself and family.—A wise man would have heeded her; but Mrs. Lavender soon found that she had allied herself to a very vain and foolish young man, over whom a woman of sense had no influence.

"Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom ye trust,
Did you but think how seldom fools are juſt,
So many of your sex would not in vain
Of broken vows, and faithless men complain."

These sensible and pathetic lines of Rowe frequently recurred to Mrs. Lavender, and filled her eyes with tears, till seeing all her advice useless, and a jail opening to receive her and her husband, she died of a broken heart, leaving Mr. Lavender with an only child. Poor Lavender was glad to accept a lieutenant's commission in the East Indies, on some perilous expedition, where, thanking his honourable friends for their exertions, he soon left London; having first settled his daughter Frances at a milliner's at the West end of the town, and lodged a small sum in a friend's hand for her support, the papers half a year afterwards announced the death of Lieutenant Lavender, at Calcutta.

Fanny, now a tall girl, was taken notice of by the Duke of ——, and soon introduced into his family, in the character of what every one thought, and no one dared to say. Though love had little to do with the connection between Fanny and his Grace, yet was she too well read in certain tender novels

novels not to feel towards some object this amiable propensity.

It has been shrewdly said, that a woman may be without any intrigue, but seldom with only one. Mr. Chip, the head butler in his Grace's family, was the happy object of her ardent and sentimental attachment, and Fanny easily believed the vows, protestations and oaths uttered by Mr. Chip, with little reflection, and no meaning.

This friendship ended in the usual way: The nymph became pregnant, and the swain faithless. When her tears, kisses, threats, &c. had no effect on the cool selfish, artful temper of Chip, she poured her sorrows into the bosom of his Grace. The Duke was at that time of life when stories, however improbable, related by a pretty one about himself, is readily attended to. When Fanny mentioned the probability of his soon being a father, his Grace received the news with great credulity and complaisance, dried

the tears of the distressed fair one; and promising her to take care of the child, and to settle an annuity on her, he put a note of considerable value into her hands.

The success of this negociation so elevated the spirits of Miss Lavender, that forgetting the consequences of her declaration, on meeting Chip, she upbraided him for his perfidy, hardness of heart, and want of affection, in terms of such high import, and of such loud and animated utterance, that the cowardly beefeater was sinking under the severity of her tongue, and preparing apologies for his conduct, and promises of behaving as he ought; when anger and contempt, getting the better of her reason, she lost the victory she was about to reap.—So, to set Chip's conduct in the worst light possible, Fanny related the kind behaviour of his Grace to her on this occasion.

Rous'd by a confirmation of his former suspicions, Chip ralled his courage, and beſtowed

ſtowed very liberally on his fair antagonist a term, which briefly but very fully, described the connection between her, his Grace, and himself. Put off her guard by her indignation, on recollecting herself, ſhe fell into a fit, and awakened from it in her own room.

Fanny ſoon found that her ſtory was circulated far and wide by Chip; and ſhe found that —— ſquare was no longer a reſidence for her. After ſhe had found a place to ſettle her child, and had recovered her health, ſhe made frequent viſits to W—— ſtreet; the conſequences of which we have related, in recording the courtſhip and marriage of Jedediah Purſling, Eſq.

CHAP. XVIII.

AFTER the novelty, and the consequent pleasures of being congratulated upon a son and heir were over, the mind of Pursling wanted some new object to entertain it.—The company of Mrs. Pursling was already grown irksome, nay disagreeable to him: Nor, to use a vulgar saying, was there any love lost between this amiable couple.—She despised his meanness of disposition, and the poverty of his understanding; and he hated her for her family pride, and feared her for her superior knowledge of the world, and for her powers of sarcastic reproof.

The cries from the nursery door frequently disturbed the very irritable temper of Pursling; and as young Harry Pursling possessed

sed the ill-humours of his father, scarce a day passed but the brawling of the brat was the subject of violent altercation between Pursling and his wife; when reproach was too frequently repeated to retain any zest to either party, and a sullen and long silence prevailed throughout the time they occasionally passed together.

Their parties of amusement were separate: Madam held her tea parties in one room; and 'Squire Pursling, with his smoking companions, regaled themselves with Oronooko and Burton ale in another.—All confidence was lost; and all the comforts of matrimonial intercourse fell to the ground. Miss Lavender married for interest, and felt no inconvenience in this arrangement; and Pursling having taken Mrs. Pursling for better and worse, on a motive which he called love, but which the possession of her person quickly extinguished, experienced as little regret in these family dissensions.

To fill up his time Pursling thought of a strange expedient, which was, to request of his nephews to let him again into some ſhare of the business.—The letter which expreſsed this wish, was written in very pathetic terms, and much serious complaint of the burthensomeness of time.

The Ledgers, who were now established men, and had formed large connections, put an immediate veto to this business, and rejected a very considerable sum which he had offered for the petitioned priviledge.—A lucky hit was suggested to him by Dr. Tonic, at the club one day, that he ſhould apply to the Duke of ——, who was Lord Lieutenant, to enroll him in the Commission of the Peace. A letter was immediately written by Pursling to his Grace, soliciting this honour.

The Duke, on opening the letter and seeing Pursling's name at the bottom, felt some uneasy sensations, till on the perusal of

of it he fell into an immoderate fit of laughter; and then in very decorous, nay, complimentary terms, penned a letter to Pursling, promising him that he should do himself the pleasure, and the county of S—— the benefit, of creating so able a magistrate.

This letter dissipated all the gloom and resentment which he felt at the refusal of the Ledgers, which he now saw in a different light, when his new honour was conferred on him.

Though the requisites for the due execution of the offices of one of his Majesty's Justices were rather more than Pursling's education could supply; yet, by employing a young attorney, at a considerable expence, he avoided any very material trouble in the conduct of the business, and saved himself from any blame, either from his want of sagacity or knowledge. But tho' the weightier parts of the office were thus taken from his shoulders, yet was there a certain *indefigi-*

tability about 'Squire Pursling that would not let him consign himself to the rust of inactivity.

His first summons to a turnpike meeting put him in a situation that suited this restless propensity of his mind, and he was now determined to be a surveyor of the highways, smit with the eloquence of Justice Hobble, on the danger, inconvenience, and infamy of bad roads, he was now resolved to shew, that Jedediah Pursling, Esq. was not unworthy to be one of his Majesty's Juſtices of the Peace.

Every morning, after breakfast, he appeared on the roads with a long measuring pole in his hand. To the workmen he discoursed very fluently, though not very perspicuously, on the art of making roads that should not be damaged by the longest rains; nor injured by the intersections of the heaviest carriages; and when his ideas were confused, he then, like other great men, used very hard words; and the terms con-

vexity

vexity and concavity, were uttered with a very resolute tone and a very important air of countenance. So much erudition at once puzzled the intellects and suspended the toil of the staring heroes of the rammer.

These speeches brought on, after a certain scratching of the head, an universal petition from the audience to drink his honour's health. These were not the effects which the Justice expected from his oratory, but were highly displeasing to him, as they made a demand on his purse, and declared that his discourses were *dry*. He passed on to another party of labourers, used the same discourses, and heard the self-same petitions at the close of them.—These affairs generally ended his mornings; and in the evenings he was obliged to amuse himself within.

A very large and old cat, who had been long his favourite, used to be introduced to his company on these occasions. Mr. Thomas Grimalkin was attired in a black gown,

made of an old silk cloak, and under his chin was a large band. As puss generally came in at tea of her own accord, the dress was immediately drawn from the closet, and put on this four footed friend of the Justice, whom he had early taught to walk on two feet.

In this situation he was introduced as Dr. Tom to say grace before tea, as Pursling used always, with strong self-applauding gravity, to observe, that he did not see why people should not thank God for tea and bread and butter, as well for urtle and old port. This being assented to, the rest of the ceremony was dispensed with, after Tom had taken his usual stand in a particular part of the tea-table.

Honours, it is said, change manners; so far'd it with Justice Pursling, and he broke his long silence with Madam Pursling, by communicating his Grace's letter to her,

and

and by frequently reporting to her the *bon mots* and profound observations, which he from time to time had heard at the Sessions. As Pursling was here sole talker, and Mrs. Pursling a very attentive auditor, he began to think her a very passable sensible woman, and some degree of authority was again assumed by Mrs. Pursling, on this treaty of peace; and her female associates were allowed the benefit of Dr. Tom's grace at the united tea tables.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

MANY years passed on amidst these employments and relaxations, when the tallness of young H. Pursling reminded old Pursling that it would be necessary to put his son to some school. This had not yet been done, as the long quarrel between his parents had shut up both their tongues on this, as well as on any other subject.

Pursling now communicated to his wife his intentions of sending Harry to an academy in the neighbourhood, kept by Dr. Syllabubus. With this "learned Theban" Pursling had become acquainted at the village club, and had conceived a very high idea of his talents, or at least a very favourable opinion of his taste from his concurring with him in condemning the flavour of an haunch

haunch of venison which the rest of the company approved.

Dr. Syllabubus occupied a large airy house within two miles of Mr. Pursling; and over the tops of the venetian windows was inscribed, in legible characters of gold, the bold declaration that all sciences, arts, and languages, were taught by the said Dr. Syllabubus. In truth Syllabubus and his wife had seen a great deal of the world: The former had carried an huge portmanteau over most parts of Europe after his master, a young man of fashion; and the latter had ridden in the chaise with the aforesaid man of fashion, and attended in the private hours of the said man of fashion, when the fatigues of *studying* the manners, customs, and laws of the various countries through which he galloped, had occasioned him to relieve himself by temporary retirements.

Under the roof of this respectable couple was young Harry Pursling to receive the rudiments

diments of his instruction, and to obtain that knowledge of manners and morals which was to make him an useful member of society, and to render him an amiable man.

Whatever were the acquisitions of Harry Pursling, they were satisfactory to his parents: Strange as it may appear, neither parents had given a moment's reflection on the subject of education. Pursling had obtained wealth and respectability in the world without it, and Mrs. Pursling thought an academy where dancing was taught was all sufficient for her son, whose fortune would make his intellectual treasures of little importance.

The house of Dr. Syllabubus was airy and of very respectable appearance; and the doctor answered all questions about his establishment by a printed paper, in which the institutions of his academy were set forth in very pompous phraseology. At the different vacations, when he visited Pagoda Lodge,

Lodge, young Pursling appeared very well dressed—spoke bad French fluently, and was grown very tall and genteel. One day an effusion of maternal eloquence hurried Mrs. Pursling beyond her usual loquacity which her prudence had prescribed.

"Harry Pursling," says the lady to her husband, "has very much the air and figure of a man of fashion: Do not you think so, my dear? He has not that horrid red countenance you see in some children, and that vulgar bashfulness, nor that broad, clumsy make that the lads of your country Esquires possess."

Whilst this motherly panegyric on her son Harry's person was going on by questions that did not expect an answer of doubt or hesitation, Mr. Pursling was adjusting his cravat at the glass, which action bringing into his face more than the usual suffusion of blood; and the position of the mirror exhibiting his full figure to his observation, Pursling

ling was little inclined to join in the praises of a pale face, and a slim form.

"I should choose the boy to look like a man, however;" replied Pursling, very bluntly, "and I suspect that he either is put upon a task too much for him, or that he feeds too little; and yet I am sure that his last bills for half a year's boarding were heavy enough to have enabled him to resemble an alderman, or any other of his ancestors by the father's side, whom," added Pursling, with great energy, if not indignation, "he no more takes after, Mrs. Pursling, than I resemble ——"

This effort of speaking, occasioned Mr. Pursling to tear off great part of the end of his laced cravat; and his good wife hastened out of the room after a fresh one, which, as she sent in by a servant, the conversation on this subject of course dropped.

Near

Near two years afterwards, Pursling thought little of his son's education, unless when he was reading the bills at the different vacations. It was near the end of the half year that one day old Pursling returned from the club, after an ill-dressed dinner, dissatisfied and out of temper with the entertainment: He was determined that Mrs. Pursling should not be more comfortable than himself, and revived, in a very surly tone of voice, the old subject.

" It is high time, Mrs. Pursling, to take Harry from the academy: He has been there these seven years, and, upon my credit, his bills are very enormous and intolerable, and I see nothing for my money but an half-starved boy of seventeen. Now, had he been a sightly lad, I should have put him into a genteel shop, in the linnen line, where he would have done well, and attracted many maids, widows, nay wives, Mrs. Pursling, to his shop; and, by due attendance on the dinners of his *company*, he

he might have increased his habit of body to the respectable dimension of a London merchant."

At the latter end of this speech, Pursling surveyed, with visible satisfaction, his own portly round figure and belly, enveloped in some yards of scarlet cloth, ornamented with lace, and gold spangles. This self-review prevented Pursling from observing the surprise, disgust, and indignation arising in the countenance of Madam Pursling.

"What," exclaimed this fashionable lady, in a voice louder than was necessary, as Pursling sat very near her, "will you take Harry away from Dr. Syllabubus? from an academy where all sciences and languages are taught, and put him into a trade? I am in hopes that Harry will be a poet, an historian, an orator, a writer in all the magazines; (the favourite vols. of Mrs. Pursling,) that he will—"

"He

"He may be all you say," interrupted Pursling, very drily; "for Harry seems very much inclined to be idle, as I suppose all your poets, and orators, as you call them, or how come they all to be so poor, and why?"—

On the heel of this sarcastic interrogation, to which Mrs. Pursling was drawing up an answer, this embryo poet, orator, and philosopher, entered abruptly into the parlour, and the silenced disputants beheld him for some time with astonishment and profound silence.

CHAP. XX.

HOW this clashing of opinions might have ended we know not, as the humour of Pursling at this time was by no means in want of the provocation of opposition to urge him to a quarrel with Mrs. Pursling; for though he had abus'd the wine and the dinner the whole afternoon, yet had he eat of the one and drank of the other, in that profane manner which grumblers at a feast are often seen to do.

Another object engaged his attention;—Harry Pursling's looks were more bloodless, if possible, than usual, and his mode of puzzling himself in his narrative, by endeavouring at detail, more than usually remarkable.

It

It must not be presumed that Harry Pursling, though he was little improved in the art of communicating his ideas, either by the figures of rhetoric or the flowers of poetry, brought from Dr. Syllabubus' academy no improvement whatever. From his dancing master he had learnt to be formal in his geſtures, without adding to his appearance either by grace or ease:—From the French uſher he had acquired enough to violate at every word the idiom of his mother tongue, by the gabble of a foreign language very imperfectly taught.

Without the ſagacity to diſcover what real good manners were, without ſenſibility to feel what they ſhould be, and without ſufficient intellect to perceive their uniform utility, he appeared to men an impertinent prig, and to the women an officious and troublesome coxcomb.—Ancient maidens thought he meant to be rude, when helping them on with their cloaks, he was ſo particular in the adjuſtment. Young women had

so often jok'd at him on his knowledge of the detail of the female dress, his taste in gauzes and colours, that he felt abashed at their presence; and though a very vain man, sometimes suspected that the smiles of the youthful fair were little connected with any symptoms of approbation.

Though young Pursling had not enlarged his mind with any excursions into the regions of science, or laid up any store of elegant amusement, by a fond attention to works of art; yet did he not bring home a mind wholly destitute of accompliſhments. Young Pursling could make conserves; was an excellent hand at composing a cathartic; and no one could scatter over the superficies of a trifle, more brilliant ornaments.

Alas! that knowledge should bring sorrow to its possessor. The laſt mentioned acquirement was the occasion of the sad catastrophe which drove him from Dr. Syllabubus' acamedy, and hurried him an "unexpected gueſt"

gueſt" into the parlour of Pagoda lodge.—One day, in expectation of ſuperior viſitors on the morrow, Mrs. Syllabus had put her whole eſtabliſhment into confuſion, and her ſervants into that headlong haſte, which uncommon viſitors generally do produce in private families: A ſuperb *trifle* was the object of this anxiety.—Mrs. Syllabus did not forget her pupil, Harry Purſling, and as he was now arrived at the age of diſcretion, ſhe ſolicited his aid on this important occaſion.

Mrs. Syllabus and her pupil had juſt completed a large trifle, and were jointly conveying it from the kitchen to the ſtore-room, when Harry Purſling being more engaged with the ſtill lovely countenance of Mrs. Syllabus, than attentive to preſerve the equilibrium of the weight in hand, he overturned it into the open boſom of his fair inſtructreſs.

The affright which arose in the mind of young Pursling, at the thought of spoiling so many yards of muſlin, which encircled the luxuriant bosom of Mrs. Syllabus, occasoned him, with the haste and adroitness of a tavern waiter, to apply a towel to disengage this seat of the Cupids from the dreadful inundation. Harry Pursling's hands were busily employed on this occasion when Dr. Syllabus opened the parlour door, and beheld his pupil engaged in this unacademical experiment.

——"*Trifles* light as air
Are to the jealous confirmation strong
As holy writ,"

Says Nature's prime secretary. But jealousy was no part of the Doctor's character. He had married Mrs. Syllabus for a certain sum regularly paid to her by a former admirer; and he expected no fidelity from her, nor hoped for any affection; motives of a more prudential nature induced the Doctor

to

to assume the part of anger on this delicate situation.

For some time before this, he had found that Harry Pursling was breaking through his controul; and that Mrs. Syllabus had on some late occasions assumed a more than common influence and controul over himself and his affairs: He thought therefore this time a proper one to check the insolence of his pupil, and to tell his wife he was ſtill the maſter of himself and his house, and the sole and active defender of her honour. He therefore uttered his suspicions in the strongeſt language of accusation; and expressed his fury in the loudeſt accents of clamour.—Nor was his anger confined to words; he seized a foil that hung near him, with all the rage of a jealous husband, and ran like lightning at the trembling Harry Pursling, whose fears converted the harmless instrument into a two edged sword.

The young ſtudent in confectionary took to his heels with great precipitation, and effected his escape, whilſt the Doctor was in the act of ſupporting the fainting and loudly screaming Mrs. Syllabus, and employed in ſtopping her mouth; as he by no means wished that this fracas should be known by any but the parties therein concerned: and on no consideration would he have had the affair become serious and public.

But this mock anger brought with it those sad consequences which the Doctor had not the wit to foresee:—He expected to have, with much solemnity, granted pardon to both the offenders on their knees! and extorted from them a full and ample promise of mending their behaviour for the future in every part of it.

The matter was ill-managed: Mrs. Syllabus was so unwell, that she was obliged to put off her grand visitors to a distant day; and Dr. Syllabus lost the most lucrative pupil he

he had, in a ſtrange and very abrupt manner. Young Purſling having quitted the houſe, ran with full ſpeed, and without looking behind him, by which he loſt his way by two miles, and came late in the evening, tired and harraſſed, to Pagoda-lodge, as we have already related in the preceding chapter.

CHAP XXI.

WHEN Mrs. Sophronia Simper had married Dr. Tonic, as we have recorded in a former chapter, she added another inſtance to many myriads, that love and reaſon are quite ſtrangers to each other, by giving the whole diſpoſal of her fortune into the hands of Dr. Tonic, which was to devolve to him at her death.

Upon this diſtribution of her fortune, Tonic aſſumed the power of both lord and maſter of her perſon and poſſeſſions. The former

he put very little value upon; the other he made subsurvient to his will alone.

He had on all occasions openly declared his intentions of bestowing the much greater part of his fortune on his eldest daughter, whose temper, person, and acquirements, had gained a complete and exclusive possession of her father's confidence and affection. He had observed the delicate reserve of his younger daughter, when in his company, with a sensation bordering on aversion; and considered it, though a silent, yet a very significant and bitter reproach on the looseness of his conduct and the indecency of his general conversation.

Mrs. Tonic was a woman of no understanding, and of no influence in her house: Fond of her husband beyond the bounds of common sense and decorum, she never attempted to check the impurities of her husband's conversation; and indeed had too little reflection to perceive that such behaviour on his side must be highly prejudicial to the minds

minds of young women now at a marriageable age. Besides, as a step-mother, she did not like to exert a power where no natural command might justify reproof, and no affection could soothe its harshness.

The eldest daughter of Tonic would have occasioned too much exertion for so weak a woman as Mrs. Tonic was, ever to have practiced. Harriot Tonic, the younger would often leave the room, though under the apparent frown and displeasure of her father, whilst his facetiousness greatly diverted the rest of the company, in whose unrestrained laughter they were always joined by Mrs. and Miss Tonic.

Miss Tonic, or the heiress, as we call her, had very early in life betrayed a very amorous disposition, a feeble understanding, and a mind extremely vain and arrogant. These qualities induced her to assume, with a masculine style of dress, the air and language of a male rake. A perpetual stare, (made very

conspicuous by large black eyes) when a comely young man was in her company; and the abrupt introduction of love subjects into her discourse, which was at once bold and highly impassioned, discovered to her male audience the favourite topic of her heart.—With this great knowledge of love matters, which she had collected in the parlour, she became a very troublesome visitor to the kitchen, and a most dangerous spy over the more tender-hearted females of the family.

The following incident, as it shows an early trait in the character of Miss Tonic, and as it ended as we wish it may in all future events of this kind, we will not suppress:

The attentions of the footman, a perfect fribble, to Betsey the chambermaid, a very pretty girl, but whose heart was too tinderfied by amorous ditties, did not escape Miss Tonic, and she watched over them with all the care of a Duenna. One moon

light

light evening Thomas and Betsey had retired to a long walk in the garden, at the end of which, with a few laurels between, hung a swing. Thomas not contented with the kisses, of which the foolish lass had allowed him so free an indulgence, was proceeding to take liberties; at which the chaste moon hid her head under the passing cloud, when Betsey gave a most tremendous scream, crying, "look'e there you wicked man."—The fellow turned round, and just opposite to him a spectre in white, of more than human stature, appeared plainly to him, and sunk gradually into nothing. The rascal took to his heels and ran away, leaving his mistress in a swoon on the ground: his haste was accelerated by the sound of two females shrieking most violently, and approaching towards him.

The spectre was no other than Miss Tonic, who had followed this couple into the garden; and having drawn her white gown over her head, and raising herself up in the air by means of the string belonging to the

swing, had exhibited a figure of most formidable height; and on Betsey's scream, was herself so terrified, that her descent to the ground was more rapid than intended. On seeing Betsey fall on the ground with so violent a shriek, the sympathy of Miss Tonic's nerves occasioned her likewise to utter the same tones of terror-bred surprise.

When these females had recovered their fright, to which they had mutually contributed, and an amnesty was settled between them, they in a very friendly manner left the garden, and approached towards the house with great rapidity of utterance: They both cast the most severe reflections on the cowardice and the villany of Thomas; and forgot, very naturally, in the abuse of this recreant knight, the palpable folly and meanness of their own proceedings in this evening's adventure.

What the continual threats, counsels, and entreaties of her friends could not effect,

fect, in persuading Betsey of the bad character of her lover, and the weakness of her conduct towards him, the unmanly desertion of her by Thomas, under this dreadful vision in the garden, now most completely and radically effected,

Did we not think that a good and useful moral to the female world might be drawn from this frivolous incident, and that this trait of curiosity in our young lady was more fully descriptive of her rising manners, than several leaves of eloquent and pathetic harrangue could be, we had not inserted this *ludicrous* story of a ghost, in times wherein those personages are so respectably represented in the pages of fictitious history.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

IT will appear a singular circumstance to the reader, that we have been so long silent on the subject of the debt due to Pursling from the Duke of ——, as it was highly improbable that a man of Pursling's sordid disposition should wave so large a claim, the sum not being less than 3000l. In fact, during the time that young Pursling was at school, Pursling had made various application for the said sum, and had received many very polite letters from his Grace himself, including promises of early payment, and likewise very flattering offers of being of service to his son, in an appointment which might fully indemnify Pursling for the non-payment of the said sum.

These

These letters had put very ambitious thoughts into the head of Pursling. At one time he was determined to ask his Grace to put himself into Parliament for the borough of Bribe-nought, then likely to be vacant by the declining health of the present member. But this idea was dismissed, upon finding more difficulties annexed to a Justice of Peace, arising from his want of education and general talents, than he was aware of previous to his soliciting that situation, and than what he was willing to confess after his appointment.

After a little experience of his defects, he could not but imagine that still greater requisites of learning and ability were necessary to be a senator, an office which he could not transact, as he did that of the Peace Magistrate, by proxy.

On receiving, from time to time, very flattering accounts of his son's learning from Doctor Syllabus, he was determined to wait till

till his son Harry Pursling came of age, and then to petition the Duke for the vacancy which the returning health of the aforesaid member placed now at a greater distance.

He therefore read in the *printed* letters of Dr. Syllabus, at each vacation, that his son was a pretty philosopher, a smart orator, and a genteel poet. The same letters were sent all round by the ingenious Dr. Syllabus to the different parents of the children whom he had under his tuition.

Doctor Syllabus knew enough of the world to be assured, that a parent never suspects any misrepresentation in this case; and never likes any account of his son that may damp his hopes of his future eminence.—By this tender fraud Doctor Syllabus always kept those scholars which were once entered on his books; for thus prepossessing the parents in favour of his sagacity and penetration into the latent sparks of genius in their boys, he guarded himself against the complaints

complaints of the boys themselves, either with respect to his severity, his partiality, or his bad table and inconvenient lodging.

It is true, the reveries of Pursling were often disturbed by Mrs. Pursling's advice, founded on the letters which she had received concerning the Duke's affairs. In some he was represented as dying; in others as setting off for the continent, having granted annuities to the full amount of his property: But the obstinacy of Pursling would not listen to the prudent advice of his wife, who exhorted him to make a claim, and obtain an annuity on the Duke's life at an advantageous interest. Pursling never took advice from any one; and to listen to his wife, he thought would be giving up the allowed superiority of male over female sagacity. At last a letter arrived, that the Duke in great agony of body and mind had shot himself on the continent, after living in an obscure village and suffering the utmost distresses of poverty in his old age.

This

This change of all his schemes, and the loss of his money, gave Pursling a very violent fit of the gout. During this paroxims of suffering and apprehension, Pursling called in Dr. Tonic, and seemed much improved by the Doctor's society and lively conversation. When they touched on the the Duke's death, Tonic informed Pursling that his Cassino was now inhabited by a Captain Canvass, a navy officer advanced in years, whose manners were truly those of a plain and unadulterated English seaman: That his wife was a gentle and good sort of a woman, and her son very much inclined to the mother's mild disposition, yet animated with all the spirit that must have formerly belonged to Captain Canvass. Young Canvass, he understood, paid great attention to his own daughter, Harriot, but as she was no great favourite of his, and as the courtship was carried on in another house, which he visited seldom, the progress of the business was little known, or heeded indeed by him.

These anecdotes, as they respected not his own family, were little attended to by old Pursling; but the close attention of Dr. Tonic during his illness, and, above all, his declaration of making his eldest daughter his heiress, determined Pursling to enlist Dr. Tonic among his dearest friends; and the house of Tonic and Pagoda Lodge were continually open to the respective visitors of both families.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

MISS Tonic being at an early period of her life trusted with her own conduct by her too indulgent father, used frequently on Sunday to ride over to Pagoda Lodge without any attendant. She was with little solicitation persuaded to stay to dinner on that day, as the young Ledgers, Pursling's great nephews, were accustomed generally to pay a Sunday visit to their uncle.

Miss Tonic always staid at that time, nor could the want of a moon, in the winter part of the year, alarm her, or prevent her the enjoyment which she experienced in the company of these London beaux.

Harry

Harry and John Ledger were both personable men, and possessed all that flow of spirits and vociferous merriment, which youth, health, and a thriving trade most generally inspire. Though their wit was coarse, and their mirth and manners boisterous, yet, when the occasion required, they neither wanted talents nor address; but they knew not the restraints of well-bred society. —They soon discovered the uncommon pleasure with which Miss Tonic listened to their wildest effusions of ribaldry, which they uttered at the tea table, after sitting longer than usual over their wine. Their journeys homewards were much enlivened by their mutual communications respecting the heiress, especially by tales of occurrences that happened to each of them, when their visits to Pagoda Lodge were made separately. The squeezes of the hand, kisses, &c. which the shady walk encouraged and concealed, were discovered to each other, as far as their respective characters of openness and reserve would permit. The lady's behaviour

viour was then pourtrayed by these faithless and discourteous knights, in colours of more truth and vivacity, than tenderness or delicacy.

The first acquaintance which Pursling contracted with Dr. Tonic, originated in the attachment which the rich are seen to feel towards the rich, and was continued by some excellent dinners of the said Dr. Tonic, recommended by his professed knowledge in the art of cookery.

When his son left the academy, old Pursling then began to find new reasons for cultivating the friendship of Dr. Tonic, as he (Pursling) was very ambitious to consider Miss Tonic as his future daughter-in-law.—Of young Purslings talents to please, as a father, he was not likely to doubt; as a man, he was not able justly to appreciate.

Young Pursling in person was very tall and very thin, qualities which he derived from

from his mother. The total insipidity of look, arising from the smallness of his features, and lack of intelligence and passion, made him strongly resemble his father. To great effeminacy of appearance and disposition, he had an impudence not easily to be paralleled, when personal fear did not withhold him. On such occasions he was uncommonly quiet and correct, and civil without kindness. As he was in general humoursome, vain and proud, his dependants hated him, and his equals scorned him.

His time, since he totally resided at Pagoda Lodge, must have hung very heavy on his hands, had not a little dabbling in physic, which he had learnt from Dr. Tonic, his great friend, and a constitution originally feeble, and still more impaired by indulgence in eating and drinking, supplied him with daily employment.

This theory and practice he had begun at Dr. Syllabus's, under the encouragement of

of the apothecary to the academy, whose bills fully declared young Pursling's progress in the theory and practice of physic. By taking steel powders on Sunday, a cathartic on Wednesday, a diaphoretic another day, and preparing lavender water, and other essences for his mamma and himself, he got thro' the seven days of the week with tolerable ease and credit to himself.

Had old Pursling possessed a grain of common sagacity, he would soon have perceived the little advances which his son had made in the good graces of Miss Tonic, who treated him with great incivility when any other young man was present, and especially before the Ledgers; and when he was her sole companion, with all her love of admiration, she received his attentions with indifference.

On these happy occasions young Pursling would talk like any love-sick swain of the ardour of his attachment, and sometimes in strains

strains more becoming Mark Antony at the feet of Cleopatra, he would breathe furious expressions of vengeance against any one who should presume to be his rival.

In answer to these tender effusions and magnanimous threats, the lady would sometimes reply with a sarcastic smile only: At other times she would make some very intelligible and very indecorous remarks on the paleness of his phiz, the weakness of his nerves, and his total want of beard; circumstances which she implied were very unlikely to qualify him either for her defender, her lover, or her husband.

Young Pursling had all the avarice of his father; and though he little relished these facetious remarks on his person, yet such was his *tender* attachment to her fortune, that he found no impediment in his own feelings to prevent his continuing his assiduities to a woman who, even in his own opinion, despised

pised both his person, his mind, and his understanding.

In her walks he frequently attended on the heiress: and one day having made an excursion to some distance from Pagoda Lodge, they were met by a young man in a blue coat lined with white cloth. On passing them he pulled off his hat, with a slight address to Miss Tonic.

Young Pursling, whose pride was founded on his father's reputed opulence, seeing a a young man of very plain appearance, and modess demeanour, stared full in his face, and mimicking his gesture very adroitly, burst into a rude fit of laughter.

The young man immediately returned, and approached Pursling with a very quick step; who seeing the stranger so near him, and observing the steady anger of his looks, felt himself planet-struck, and stuttered out a few words:

"I

"I did not laugh at you, Sir;—I and this lady—that is, Sir—"

"It matters not what you may attempt to say," replied the young man in blue;—"your own conscience will give you the lye." Approaching close to Pursling he delivered him his address, and demanded Pursling's, who stood silent and evidently embarrassed.

Miss Tonic satisfied the gentleman on this particular, and the stranger departed with great composure.

"You seem not very well," said Miss Tonic to her heroic companion,—"we had better return home: Should he prove a rival of your's, Mr. Pursling, my sensibility (laughing secretly) cannot bear the thoughts of the consequences; and I am sure by your present looks, that they would be very terrible indeed; I shall be quite glad to get home."

Pursling followed silent and sullen; as his antagonist was retired, his countenanace bore indeed the appearance of palpable resentment; but it was occasioned by the petulance and merry visage of the fair lady whom he was convoying home. How he might have treated the lady in this bad humour we know not, but luckily for his gallantry, they were now arrived at Dr. Tonic's house, where young Pursling left the heiress with very little ceremony, and walked speedily forward to Pagoda Lodge.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

WHEN young Pursling entered the room where his father was sitting, he related the affront which he had received from a stranger to him, but well known it seems to Miss Tonic; he expressed his indignation at the gentleman's conduct, or *fellow's*, as he chose to call him, with all the malevolence, and all the fury of a coward, who found himself in a place of safety: His account of his own conduct was in a tone of evident exculpation.

Among young Pursling's talents for impudence, was that of mimickry, in which few monkeys that had not seen much of the world, could in any degree rival him.—

These apiſh tricks he had been encouraged in from his infancy; all the visitants at Pagoda Lodge, who had any thing peculiar in their manners or persons, were exhibited by this posture-master for the entertainment of the present company.

He could take off the wadling yet conſequential gait of his father, and his short ungrammatical mode of speaking; and he could imitate still better the airy toss of the head, the mincing step, and the soft whispering tones of Mrs. Purſling. Both these exhibitions were brought out for the entertainment of the single party with whom he happened then to be alone. This illiberal and unmanly talent had met with its just puniſhment on the preſent occaſion. The venerable magiſtrate conſulted with his clerk what could be done to prevent the meeting of these young men. The clerk, who knew the preciſe quantity of valour in the heart of young Purſling, adviſed that the latter ſhould, on receiving a written challenge, repair immediately

mediately to the place of appointment, and that the said Justice Pursling ſhould, with proper attendants, be in readiness to arrest the culprits on the spot.

This proposal seemed very agreeable both to the father and son: the former liked the safe pomp and circumstances of the business, which would at once shew the tender circumspection of the father, and the laudable activity of the magistrate. Harry Pursling flattered himself that this contrivance would save appearances, and terminate in reconciliatory measures.

The next morning a genteel looking young man, dressed in a navy uniform, called at Pagoda Lodge, and enquiring for young Pursling, told the servant that he had a letter which he wiſhed to deliver into the hands of Mr. Harry Pursling himself. He was introduced to young Pursling, who was sitting alone, and a very large and handsome medicine chest was placed before him,

whilst he with great composure was measuring some grains of mercury, which was to be given to his mother's favourite dog, whose late violent indisposition had exhausted the patience and baffled the skill of the celebrated Dr. Tonic.

The young seaman, to whom the sight of a person of his own age so employed had nearly betrayed into a loud laugh, composed his features as well as he could, and delivered the letter of Lieutenant Canvass into the hands of this dog doctor.

It was perused by young Pursling with great solemnity and attention, and an answer was given with an air of cool defiance, saying that he would meet the said Lieutenant Canvass next morning at the time and place appointed.

The person who had brought this unwelcome message, was struck with the coolness of Pursling's manner, and had hoped, from

from the character and appearance of Pursling, that he ſhould bring back a letter of apology to his friend, Lieutenant Canvass, for though a man of known intrepidity himself, he very much disapproved of venturing life on trivial occasions. He left Pagoda Lodge, convinced against his former notions, that great effeminacy of manners might not be incompatible with a very manly spirit.

On the next morning early, Pursling and Canvass met; and they had no sooner measured the ground, than Justice Pursling, with his retinue, appeared suddenly on the spot, and in virtue of his office seized on these desperate combatants.

Young Pursling appearing on the ground with no second, and shewing great indifference in his countenance, had raised the suspicions of young Canvass and his friend, and now the plot, by the interference of the father, was too palpable to deceive him. The mock resistance of young Pursling, on the

officers of Justice endeavouring to hurry him and his antagonist from the field, scarcely appeared less natural than the real fury of Canvass, who execrated in terms of warm indignation and contempt, the cowardice of his foe, and the mean trick of his family.

But the tumult which was thus excited, was soon directed into another quarter, by the appearance of a lady in great distress on the opposite side of the ground. With dishevelled hair and outstretched hands, and in a tone of voice scarcely audible from convulsive sighs, she demanded her son at the hands of the Justice.

This respectable female had nearly approached within a few paces of old Pursling, when her shrieks alarmed his ear in a voice which he thought was not totally unknown to him. On the lady's further advances, the astonished Pursling recollected the features of Mary Staunton, his old sweetheart and fellow servant in the house of

Moses

Moses Wigley, grocer, in W— ſtreet, as has been related in the former part of this hiſtory.

Mrs. Canvass (for that was the name she now bore in the character of a wife) was not a little ſurprized that she should find in so singular a manner her old friend Purſling, in the venerable character of a Juſtice of Peace. Though Mrs. Canvass was much altered and improved, both in her manners and person since her former connection; yet the natural simplicity of her mind remained, and the amiable propensities of heart were retained in all their purity. She poured forth her thanks to God and her blessings on Purſling, for his kind interference in behalf of young Canvass; and apologized for the severe invectives which she had cast on him on entering the spot, and pleaded ignorance of his person and office as the ground of her accusation.

Pursling felt his mind under great perturbation and astonishment, and to avoid the enquiring looks of the rest of the party, he took Mrs. Canvass aside, and told her the whole story as it really was, and his own contrivance to hinder any mischief ensuing from these two violent young men, as he was pleased to name both of them.

Mrs. Canvass again, in the fullness of her heart, repeated her thanks to God, who had suggested to the mind of Pursling this expedient to save the blood of persons so nearly allied. She then related her whole story to Pursling, and the nature of her present situation.

Pursling was all amazement and confusion, and some very strong compunctions of conscience attended him during her relation, and the idea of young Canvass being his own son, and the child whom he had designed for the Founding Hospital, suggested reflections of a nature too painful even for the

the dull and selfish feelings of Justice Pursling.—We will proceed to lay before the reader circumstances yet undiscovered to him in the following chapter.

CHAP. XXV.

MANY years before this event, related in the last chapter, Captain Canvass, a naval officer, who was a relation of Mrs. Wigley, who had so kindly protected Mary Staunton when she and her child had left Pursling's house in W. ſtreet, as mentioned in the beginning of the history frequently visited Mrs. Wigley, and attentively observed the gentle manners and neat person of his relation's friend and companion. As the Capt. was in his Majesty's service, and had acquired what to him was a competence; and as he was a batchelor, he intended to resign

his employment, and live near Mrs. Wigley, his oldest acquaintance and nearest relation.

He had frequently heard the melancholy story of Mary Staunton and her child, and from frequently pitying her, and execrating Pursling, he felt a sensation for the fair sufferer as nearly approaching to love as his time of life would admit of. He soon offered Mary his hand, who after telling him her history very faithfully, accepted the kind proposal of the generous seaman.

Mrs. Wigley at her death, which happened soon after the marriage which she strongly promoted, died and left Mary a very comfortable annuity. For several years Captain Canvass and his wife lived in town, and in all the matrimonial harmony which the kind and frank temper of the Captain, and the affectionate heart and mild disposition of Mrs. Canvass were likely to produce. Capt. Canvass adopted and educated young Staunton, and called him by his own name. He

was

was very soon captivated by the activity of the boy and the gentleness of his temper.

An event determined young Canvass's destination. Captain Canvass and his wife were one day in the vicinity of town, taking a very unfashionable walk, arm in arm, when young Canvass discovered a pond near them, and produced from his pocket a little ship of no mean construction, and launched it with great delight on his new discovered main.

Captain Canvass was all rapture, and hugging the boy very affectionately, asked him who made the ship: The boy answered, that Tom Splinter, his servant, had made the hulk, and that he had made part of the rigging, as he could show him when he got home. He was soon after sent to Christ's Hospital, and soon put on the list to succeed to any vacancy in the service.

When

When young Canvass had been some years at sea, Captain Canvass received an account of his elder brother's death, which put him in possession of a considerable property in the county of —; but as the family house was very large and much out of repair, by the extravagance of the late possessor, and as Captain Canvass had formed many respectable connections in town and its vicinity, he did not like to be at so great a distance from them; and as the Cassino was then to be let, he had hired it some months before the event in our last chapter. On their settling at the Cassino, Captain Canvass had sent for his son, wiſhing him to take up his residence with him, and to quit the sea service totally.

As it was now a time of peace, and the joint request of two persons whom he ardently loved, young Canvass immediately complied with the request.

On the day which young Canvass met Miss Tonic and young Pursling, he had returned

turned home to the Cassino in very high dudgeon; and, from some expressions which had fallen from him in the course of the afternoon, Mrs. Canvass began to apprehend that her son intended to revenge the insolence of the young stranger, and to call upon him for what, in the style of the world, is termed a *proper satisfaction*. What more confirmed her in the truth of her apprehensions, was the information which she had received from Tom Splinter, with whom she held a very confidential conversation on this subject, and from whom she had learnt that young Canvass had in the morning been seen examining and cleaning his pistols; and that moreover he had carried these formidable weapons in a guarded manner at night to his chamber.

Mrs. Canvass, with the promise of a large fee, had secured Tom Splinter to watch all night the motions of his young master, and in the hour which he observed him to arise, to tap at her room door.

The

The anxious and sleepless mother arose on the instant, and hastening to the ground, arrived there unseen till the uproar which we have related brought her forward, as Tom Splinter had very warily hid himself, and kept near young Canvass, ready to hold out proper signals to Mrs. Canvass.

Both Mrs. Canvass and old Pursling had their respective reasons for not discovering to the young people the particulars of their connections; and young Pursling and young Canvass were introduced to each other as the sons of very old friends. The families became of course acquainted, and Mrs. Canvass and Mrs. Pursling drank their social cups of tea together in a very neighbourly way.

Women, to a certain point, conclude treaties of visiting with each much sooner than men do with men, as the latter perhaps form more permanent, and more intimate associations, and are therefore more slow and

and circumspect in forming them. The men, indeed, in this instance, were not composed of materials sufficiently similar to produce a coalition in a friendly way.

Capt. Canvass possessed all the plain blunt, yet liberal and easy manners of an English seaman: Old Pursling exhibited the stiff reserve, and cold preciseness of a rich and purse-proud citizen.

The young people were as unlikely to be intimate: The character of young Canvass consisted of spirit, health, activity, generosity, and a want of every mean passion. Young Pursling was sickly, lazy, reserved, suspicious, cowardly, and intriguing. Their pursuits and tempers being so opposite, no interchange of mind between these young men ever took place; and though they afterwards met frequently at Dr. Tonic's, no friendly communication of sentiments could at any time be kindled, and young

Pursling

Pursling continued his addresses to Miss Tonic, and young Canvass commenced his attentions to Hariot Tonic without any interference on either side, or any suspicion that they were both carrying on their tender connections in the same family.

Mrs. Pursling, who had more knowledge of the world than her husband, and infinitely more natural sagacity in these matters, had some time ago perceived the improbability which existed that Harry Pursling should ever be joined in holy matrimony with Miss Tonic, as she not only had observed her aversion of him, nay contempt, but had also perceived Miss Tonic's palpable attachment to the younger Ledger; and had therefore always received Miss Tonic with great coolness, and not unfrequently with incivility.

This conduct on the side of Mrs. Pursling had kept these ladies very much apart;

of

of course, very little, if any communication subsisted between the mistress of Pagoda Lodge, and the sprightly and loquacious heiress of the house of Tonic.

CHAP. XXVI.

ONE day the younger Ledger entered the counting-house where the brother was sitting, and holding a letter in his hand, at the same time exhibiting a countenance of much sorrow and reflection, presented the letter for the perusal of his brother.

Harry Ledger was quite a man of the world, ambitious, selfish, vain, and enterprizing; he remained a batchelor, as the little leisure which business, and his favourite

vourite recreation, gambling, allowed him, prevented his attention to the female world, and as his avaricious and ambitious views in marriage were not easily satisfied.

The reasons which had kept John Ledger in a state of celibacy, though very different, yet were they not less powerful. John had not entered so soon into business as his elder brother, being some years his junior; and the interval between his boyhood and his installment in Wood-street, was spent in reading such books as accident had placed in his way, and his own peculiar turn of mind had recommended to him. The latter were romances, or romance-like novels, which pretend to treat of the passion of love merely as the production of intellect and sentiment, whilst, by descriptions most elaborately luscious, and details of beauty the most voluptuous, the senses were attacked by the most combustible matter.

John

John Ledger read these serio-comic tales with such unremitted attention that between "declining virtue and desire," he was at once a Platonist in his theory of the tender passion, and a very rake in practice. But neither the delusions of an amorous fancy, nor a conduct in general too much the slave of opportunity, for any long time radically weakened the effect of a virtuous education, or could sully the delicacy, or contaminate the generosity of his disposition. The habitual turn of his thoughts had by degrees impressed on his features the real character of his mind: His eye excited in the mind an immediate sympathetic softness; the silver tones of his voice played in unison with the melting sensibility of his language: and few female ears could resist the combined fascination of their powers.

We cannot be surprised, therefore, that Miss Tonic, a lady who talked much of sentiment, and who was on one subject "tremblingly alive all over," could not resist

sist a "swain so formed in every way to please," though the coolness with which young Ledger received her first advances must have repelled a lady of less amorous enterprize: "A person was asked," records the facetious Joe Miller, "why he had married a very little woman; he replied, that of evils one should choose the least." This prudent gentleman's reason would have been the best that could have been given for a similar connection with Miss Tonic.

This lady was in her person very short and spare; and though active in her motions, yet, a total want of grace and feminine elegance had turned that good quality into a defect. She became, instead of a nymph, an hoyden; her vivacity degenerated into pertness, and her perpetual anxiety to obtain an easy deportment, produced a vulgar effrontery. From the society of such a female the modest man retired abashed,

ed, and the man of taste and refinement beheld her with disgust.

These personal and intellectual blots in the character of Miss Tonic, though palpably obvious to the most inattentive, were yet totally unsuspected by the lady herself. Her strong partiality for the younger Ledger, much "overstepped the modesty of nature," and the many opportunities which she gave the young man to plead his passion, led to very serious consequences, which were the contents of the letter which he had just put into the hands of his elder brother.

The latter, perceiving the countenance of his brother, on entering the counting-house to be very much dejected, and marked strongly with confusion, imagined that the letter was from some correspondent of importance who had failed, and therefore truly and simpathetically assumed a very grave air himself. On the perusal of the epistle, he astonished the sentimental John Ledger with frequent

frequent titterings; and, at the end of it, totally confounded him with the explosion of an horse laugh.

Harry Ledger, though a man of honour on the Exchange, or at Brooks's, was, with regard to women, contemptuous in his opinion, haughty in his manner, and selfish and tyrannical in his conduct. These sentiments and behaviour arose from his early connection with women, from whom the virtuous part of society have cautiously separated themselves; and this disposition was retained by him through his long intimacy with a woman whose beauty was the only good quality she could boast to possess.

John Ledger observed the levity of his brother on this occasion at first with disgust, and soon with indignation, when the other asked him, with mock tenderness, if he had made the proper preparations on this important discovery; pointed out to him a shop for child-bed linen at nearly five per cent. cheaper

cheaper than any other; and recommended him to a sober nurse who had often served his *friend* Betty Patch in that capacity with great attention, secrecy, and honour: he added, sarcastically, "I saw how it would be, Jack, this writing of melancholy sonnets, and sauntering about shrubberies by moonlight, is very much against *omnium*: And now I suppose madam expects that you will make an honest woman of her; and it would not be a bad match if you were sure of the cash. But old Tonic may live a long time—may change his intentions with respect to his elder daughter, as she has stolen a march upon him, though I think she may plead her own cause pretty well in the lines, Jack, of one of your poetical friends, and say, with John Dryden's Sigismunda,

"My tender age in luxuries was train'd
With idle ease, and pageants entertain'd;
My hours my own, my pleasures unrestrain'd.
So bred, no wonder if I took the bent
That seem'd e'en warranted by thy consent;
For when the father is too fondly kind,
Such seeds he sows, such harvest shall he find."

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Young Ledger could scarce contain his furious impatience during this harrangue; but declared, with great gravity of look, and in a firm tone of voice, his intentions of marrying Miss Tonic, whatever might be the consequences, as he considered this proceeding as the only compensation in his power to make for the injury done by him to her character.

At the last word Harry Ledger betrayed a countenance expressive of contempt for the understanding of his brother, and extremest scorn of the lady, and would have proceeded to observations or narratives very disadvantageous to both, had John's passions not overpowered him, and he hurried from the presence of his brother overwhelmed with shame, anger, and vexation. He snatched the letter out of Harry's hand, and flew in great precipitation to his own apartments.

CHAP. XXVII.

AFTER Miss Tonic had written the letter toher favourite swain which we have mentioned in our last chapter, and in terms too voluptuous and tender to be here inserted (and similar ones may be read in some posthumous works of a late female philosopher and advocate for her sex) declared her probability of being soon a mother, she was determined to change her present residence, and take the benefit of a change of air. She therefore wrote to an old school-fellow and friend, whom a more modish style of life, and the various pleasures annexed to it, had occasioned of late to neglect, if not to forget.

Miss Tonic now resolved to comply with the many invitations which she had received

from Anna Maria Teresa Grist, to visit "Honeysuckle Grove, which the latter had so frequently and so eloquently described as the seat of happiness and peace. With her maid, therefore, she set out for Wales, after receiving a letter from Miss Grist, her dearest Maria, thanking her for her kind intentions, and most amazing condescension and good nature in quitting the grand and delightful neighbourhood of London for a retired and humble cottage on the banks of the Taffy.

The meeting of these old friends, whose intimacy had been for so many years suspended (though numerous letters had passed, couched in terms of the most ardent and sentimental attachment,) was conducted in a very different manner by each party.

Maria Teresa Grist, with all the spirits which health, youth, and innocence always supply, and with all that warmth of heart which a life simple and secluded most generally

rally produces, rushed into the arms of her new visitor, who had no health, no spirits, no innocence to enable her to meet the embraces of her friend with an ardour which was due to them. Long absence, and different modes of life had not created a greater variety in their minds than they had exhibited in their persons and demeanour.

Maria Grist was a very fine woman in the eyes of all her male acquaintance, whose notions of female charms were founded on the same grounds of admiration on which they praised other living stock. Her plump, round, fair, and ruddy cheeks—her full, nay, overflowing bosom—her tall and commanding figure, formed the widest imaginable contrast with the shape of her London visitor. The violent spirits and unwearied activity of Miss Grist were often distressing to the sickly, squeamish, and capricious Miss Tonic; and so little did their habits accord, or their sentiments and dispositions agree, that before a whole month had pas-

sed, a very perceptible disgust on one side, and neglect on the other, took place.

Miss Tonic found herself every day more unwilling to disclose the fatal secret to Maria Grist.

An old aunt, who lived joint tenant in "Honeysuckle Grove," was not so inattentive as her neice to Miss Tonic's demeanour; and as she was an old lady of a very serious and unfashionable turn of mind, she by no means approved of the uncommon freedom of conversation in which Miss Tonic indulged herself; for, in the words of our great allegoric bard,

"Estoons, she grew to great impatience,
And into terms of open outrage burst
That plain discover'd her incontinence;
Ne reckt she who her meaning did mistrust."

As these fashionable flights of fancy were often indulged, not only before her niece, and her

her lover (who was a modest and plain man in appearance and manner, and so became the butt of Miss Tonic's jokes,) but likewise before other male visitors, the old lady was much concerned, and anxious to suppress, by some means or other, this licentious language of her neice's friend.

One day after dinner, when Miss Tonic talked with more than usual *vivacity* on her favourite subject, and repeated with uncommon emphasis the well known and profligate sentiment,

> "Not Cæsar's Empress would I deign to prove,
> No—make me *mistress* to the man I love."

Mrs. Grist looked with much seriousness in her manner at Miss Tonic, and said, she believed that Miss Tonic would not be so credulous in her confidence in the honour of men if she knew the particulars of a story of two unfortunate young women, which had lately happened in a neighbouring village;

village; which, (as she knew the circumstances to be true) she had taken the trouble to put them together, as she thought them a strong lesson for all young giddy girls, and might be of use to persons of a more advanced age, who appeared as little capable of conducting themselves.

Miss Tonic, without attending to the application of the last part of the sentence, or pretending to notice the particular look with which the old lady had accompanied this speech, desired to see this manuscript.

"My niece," replied the old lady, "is very used to reading, as my eyes have of late been indifferent, and as she has a strong and clear voice, we shall all hear her."

Young farmer *Harrow*, the lover of Miss Maria Grist, declared the story put him in a great passion, and that he could hardly contain his anger at Captain Felton's horrid character; "for," added he, with great emphasis,

emphasis, and in a tone unusual to him, "a man who is faithless to a woman, deserves all the rigour of punishment which the most cruel and ingenious tyrants could invent."

"What, heh!" says Miss Tonic very pertly, and with a ridiculous laugh, "What was the swain, heh—very faithless?—what, heh! did the girl follow him with a knapsack over the hills and far away, or did she, poor little soul, hang herself on a willow so high, or plunge herself in the streams of Lethe."

"I assure you, Miss Tonic," replied Maria, with a big tear in her eye, "the story is a very melancholy one, and Mr. Harrow, when we first read it from my aunt's manuscript, swore, (and I believe for the first time) some horrible oaths, but I forgive him," added she, "for the sake of his honest feelings."

Having cast a look of complacence on her lover, which he fully understood, and justly appreciated, she opened the manuscript, and read as follows :

CHAP. XXVIII.

FAITHLESS VOWS—A TRUE STORY.

IN the village of —, a few months since, resided a widow lady in a style which commanded the respect of the neighbourhood. Her sole care was the education of her neice Isabella, and her happiness the only object of anxiety which could keep alive the wishes and hopes of the old Lady.

Isabella had just exceeded her 20th year: There was not in her countenance that regular assemblage of features which are supposed

sed to constitute a perfect beauty; but her countenance beamed with the more fascinating light of vivacity and genius. Her mind had been successfully cultivated by polite literature, and her taste and judgment in books had given life and utility to the information which she obtained from them.—If the most amiable disposition, the tenderest heart, and the most improved understanding, could insure in this life happiness, Isabella would have exemplified the beautiful, yet often fallacious axiom, that virtue even here rewards her friends.

Her aunt had proposed to her as a lover, Henry, the son of an old and intimate friend; but towards this young man Isabella felt not the self-created and irresistible impulse of love. Her good sense confirmed the propriety of her aunt's choice; but her heart felt not the delicious ardent sensation of voluntary and unsuggested passion.

The intercourse between Isabella and Henry, though frequent, yet from want of strong mutual attachment, wore the complexion of tender friendship. The sighs of Henry met not with equal sympathy in the heart of Isabella.

Henry was passing his Oxford vacation with his family, when he accidently met with Captain Felton, who was stationed in a neighbouring town, on a recruiting party.—The conversational powers of Capt. Felton induced Henry to become acquainted with him.

Henry was frank and unsuspecting;—his new friend licentious, wary, and unprincipled. Success with many young women had emboldened Capt. Felton to attempt the hearts of all whose beauty or manners attracted his regard.

His person was not handsome, and his mind a stranger to every polite and useful acquirement:

acquirement: He understood flattery, and possessed vivacity of conversation on fashionable subjects. Those accomplishments by which the giddy part of the fair sex are often amused, delighted and deceived, the Captain most studiously cultivated, and most industriously displayed. Such a man did the incautious and open-hearted Henry introduce to Isabella, as a man to whom every polite attention was due.

In the course of a few weeks many opportunities of conversing together in the absence of Henry had occurred, which the Captain knew too well how to employ to his own purpose. He would often insinuate, (repeating at the same time the most extravagant praises of his friend Henry) that the genuine passion of love was free, involuntary, and not to be controuled: That an unforeseen moment alone could decide the destiny of true affection.

Isabella

neice Isabella, went in person to develope this mystery.

As they approached the castle with the utmost secrecy, the sweetest rustic melody charm'd their attention. The voice was tender and melancholy; but it was tremulous and broken by the most expressive pauses. They surprised the forlorn girl before she could attempt to fly from them. She did not indeed dread their reproach, for she was ignorant that her lover was known to them. So gentle and conciliating was the address of these fair visitors, that her every sorrow, and its author's name, were disclosed to them with the readiest confidence.

Four days of absence, an unusual conduct of the Captain, had added strange suspicions to the sorrows of this poor girl. In fact Captain F—— had quitted the country for ever.—Her sad story was interrupted by the shrieks and sudden fall of Isabella.

"It is too late," exclaimed the wretched lady, "my honour too is also sacrificed to perfidy and love."

We must draw a veil over the horrors and despair of the deluded females, and the heart-rending sighs of the much afflicted aunt. The beautiful rustic found no friend to comfort her, but wandered a short time about the ruins of the castle,

"Herself the saddest ruin."

and in a fit of despair sought at the bottom of a neighbouring stream an end of her human sorrows. The delicate and unremitted attentions of the old lady to her neice, at this time of calamity past utterance, and of shame beyond endurance, by degrees worked a salutary effect on the wounded spirit of Isabella.

When the appearance of health and intellect seemed to emerge from the pressure of the most gloomy reflection upon her fate, Isabella was determined by every honourable feeling,

feeling, that the secret of her crime should not rest in the bosom of her aunt and her own. Henry received the information fatal to all his hopes of human happiness, with a firmness of mind and a tenderness of sentiment worthy of his character. He solicited and obtained a last interview with Isabella, in which amidst a flood of tears, he in the kindnest expressions assured her of his unfeigned forgiveness.

Henry immediately left his native land, and purchasing a farm amidst the mountains of Switzerland, there he endeavoured by rural employments, and useful improvements of his fortune and his talents, to alleviate those sorrows, which though undeserved, he is willing to bear without accusation, and to remember without complaint.

CHAP. XXIX.

SUCH was the levity, or rather the depraved disposition of Miss Tonic, that tho' not a dry eye was to be seen, except her own, on the recital of this melancholy little history, she still uttered her jokes on the sensibility of the farmer, and called him an Arcadian Shepherd, not without strong intimations of the coldness of his courtship, and the prudery of Miss Grist's behaviour to her rural Adonis.

Miss Tonic had formed no idea of the passion of love dignified by sentiment and respect. She beheld the delicate attentions of Mr. Harrow to Maria, with a sensation bordering on a malignant contempt; and their approaching nuptials were matter to her

her mind at once productive of indecent and scornful raillery.

To these observations Mr. Harrow, who was a man of plain sense and excellent disposition, replied with very pointed remarks on the folly, as well as wickedness, of a woman who could talk unseemly of modesty, her best guard.

——"And his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible.—Abash'd she stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw and pin'd
Her loss."

In private, when only Mrs. Grist and Maria were present, farmer Harrow was very glad to revenge himself more satisfactorily on Miss Tonic: and he discovered to the ladies his suspicion, that the visible increase in Miss Tonic's waist was not to be ascribed to the benefit of country air, or the improvement

improvement of her appetite. The old lady heard these suggestions with her mouth wide open, and her spectacles rais'd high upon her forehead, and with frequent short breathings which exhibited her surprize and alarm; from which, when she had recovered a few moments, she discanted in a very long harrangue on the virtue of the female character in her younger days, and the forwardness of the girls in the present period; and very pointedly related the many glances which she had observed Miss Tonic had cast upon young Harrow, adding, that for her part she would be very glad that Miss Tonic would leave the cottage very soon, as her own character would not be safe if any other young man ſhould frequent the house.

Miss Griſt could scarcely surpress a smile at her old aunt's fears, but informed her that Mis Tonic would soon return to town, and waited only for a letter. This information was very agreeable to all parties, and when they had sufficiently gratified their spleen,

spleen, and satisfied their love of scandal, if it might be so called, they broke up the meeting with the universal declaration, that they must make up their minds to the worst that might happen from their imprudence in admitting a London visitor to disturb the quietness and innocence of Honey-suckle Grove.

Before this unfortunate visit, no anxiety had occurred at the grove, except when the old chaise horse was lame during a full moon, or the chickens were seized with the pip, or a storm of wind had overthrown Maria's flower pots, or Mrs. Grist's cold prevented her from going regularly to church.

Mr. Grist, brother to Mrs. Grist, spinster, was a rich miller, but seized with ambition, he had married a needy woman of quality, who soon scattered his riches by vanity and gambling. The poor miller soon went to his long home; for his abode here was

was truly wretched through his wife's conduct. The sublime Akenside well pourtrays the fate of this unfortunate husband,

" Behold, unblest at home
The father of the cheerless household mourns;
The night in vain returns,
For love and glad content at distance roam;
While she, in whom his mind
Seeks refuge from the day's dull task of cares
To meet him she prepares,
Through noise and spleen, and all the gamester's art,
A listless harrass'd heart,
Where not one tender thought can welcome find."

Her ladyship soon followed her much regretted husband, and left Honeysuckle-grove, the only farm remaining, encumbered with a very heavy debt. To pay off this mortgage was the wish and daily care of young Harrow, as this was the only impediment to his intended marriage with his blooming Maria.

The

The suspicions of the family at the grove were further encreased by the arrival of a letter, written in a man's hand, and directed to Miss Tonic. This letter brought great consolation to the declining spirits of the lady, as it contained honourable proposals of marriage, great regret for the contents of her last letter, in which she had grievouſly complained that her present situation was rendered still more melancholy by the coolness of her friends at the Grove, and the particular and encreasing shyness of her friend Maria. He likewise wished her to set off immediately, and that he would meet her about ten miles off, and return with her to London, where he had prepared a lodging, &c. for her reception.

To set off immediately was impossible, as no conveyance could be had nearer than seven miles, at which distance the next market town was situated. A horse was immediately saddled; but in driving the horse out of a shed, the cow, his companion, set off

off galloping with great speed, and leaping over the garden hedge, rushed into the walk where Miss Tonic, Maria, and farmer Harrow were then walking.

The fright which this accident accasioned brought on Miss Tonic a fit of ſickness, and the ſymptoms of an approaching labour.—Harrow took her up as easily as if she had been a doll in his hands, and carried her towards the house with all possible speed; yet in his way he could not suppress a few sarcasms on the effect of this fright.

"Well, Miss, you need not joke at us country folks; we may be as good as some London ones, though they be richer and finer, and more knowing, as a body may say, they are not more honester."

Miss Tonic was ſufficiently recollected and animated to cast a look of the utmost contempt and anger in the face of this ruſtic ſatirist.

When this party passed by the parlour door, Mrs. Grist was sitting there and preparing tea, and expecting their return from their afternoon's walk; seeing Miss Tonic carried in the arms of Harrow, apparently without life, and receiving a very significant wink from the young man, she rose from her chair very hastily, and was speeding towards the room assign'd to Miss Tonic with very little ceremony. Miss Maria Grift, seeing the hurry of spirits which her aunt exhibited, and guessing at her suspicions, and knowing the asperity of her temper and the licence of her tongue on the subject of female chastity, stopped her from entrance.

Having sent the servant, who had not yet saddled his horse, for a midwife, and calling Miss Tonic's maid, told her of the circumstances, enjoining her to keep all persons from the chamber of the sick. —This the maid promised to do; at the same time shewing every symptom of surprize

prize and astonishment at Miss Grist's information, which agreed with the duty of a female confidant on these *unforeseen* occasions.

CHAP. XXX.

THE illness of Miss Tonic grew more alarming every hour, and the unhappy young woman, from impaired health and an embarrassed mind, was unable to meet the difficulties of her situation with sufficient vigour of mind and body.

The skilfull midwife by proper exertions saved the life of the child, but the mother survived a very few hours after its birth.—The exemplary conduct of Maria Grist had won Miss Tonic's confidence, and she informed her of her connection with young

Ledger, and desired a servant might be sent for him to the place he had appointed to meet her. Though this message was speedily executed, yet when young Ledger arrived at Honeysuckle-Grove, he found a dead silence prevailing in the house, and felt a sad pre-sentiment of the real misfortune which had happened; the particulars of which he was soon informed by farmer Harrow, who had forgotten his former animosity to Miss Tonic, and given every assistance in his power to the sick mother.

The distress of mind which this recital plunged young Ledger into cannot easily be described; suffice it to say, that he bewailed and execrated his own delay, occasioned by business in town, and his not coming down to Honeysuckle Grove as soon as he knew from her first letter of the situation she was like to be in, and in the first transports of his grief, he accused himself as a murderer.

During

During this paroxism of grief, which left little recollection, the nurse brought in the child, which immediately restored the father to himself, and to the reflection that he had never enquired concerning its life or death.

The view of the child soothed his "lively sense of woe," and the few days which he passed at the grove were employed in playing with the child, till the melancholy office of the burial of Miss Tonic concluded his visit at the grove.

He had received a letter from Dr. Tonic, in answer to one he had written, informing him of his daughter's death, which betrayed a total want of sensibility, delicacy, and good manners. The consequence of which was, that the parish church, near Honeysuckle Grove, was the deposit of Miss Tonic's remains.

In a short time Ledger had gained the good opinion of the aunt, by his seriousness

and respectful manner; and that of Miss Grift, by the sensibility of his conversation and the mildness of his temper; and farmer Harrow's friendship, by the openness and candour of his disposition.

Having by their means settled the child at an excellent nurse's; and knowing the state of the family finances by the aunt's relation, he advanced the money to Harrow for the paying off the mortgage, and he had the satisfaction of seeing honest Harrow married to the buxom and good humoured Maria before he left the country.

Whilst young Ledger was thus employed, his return to town was hastened by a letter from John Ledger, demanding his immediate attendance on indispensable business.

On arranging the boxes of Miss Tonic, he discovered many little ones, which concontained white and red paints, and other mysterious cosmetics: In some were several

ral letters, written in male hands. One in particular struck his eye, which though disguis'd, seemed familiar to his recollection, and he suspected it strongly to be the writing of his brother.

Rage and jealousy at once conspiring against his mind, already made more than usually irritable, he in an instant broke thro' all the restraint of delicacy, and yielding to unwarrantable curiosity, broke open the letter, and perused the contents.

It was dated nearly at the time of his first connection with Elizabeth Patch, his present favourite, and offering her marriage, upon the supposition of Tonic's settling a certain annuity during his life, and a promise of leaving at his death the remainder of his fortune to him. The latter part of the letter was filled with a ridicule of his younger brother John, representing him as an idle man, unfit for any business, and risking his health

by the most disreputable female acquaintance.

In the first transport of passion he was determined to drop any further connection with his brother in trade, or in any other way, and to publish his conduct at large to the world. After mature consideration, he was resolved to go to town immediately, and to transact the present business with the utmost coolness and impartiality.

He found, on his arrival in London, his brother in the utmost consternation of mind, and assuming the utmost complacency towards him, which being a new style of conduct to John, soothed for a time his irritable state of mind. On a close examination of their affairs, this calm in the feelings of John Ledger seemed like the calm preceding a storm, for a total derangement of affairs, occasioned by his elder brother's boundless extravagance and want of diligence, put the heart of John into a very violent agitation.

Exasperated

Exasperated as he was by the former treatment of his elder brother, which had always been contemptuous and overbearing, he despised the kind behaviour which he had lately assumed for purposes of interest, and declared his resolution to dissolve the partnership, adding, with a very emphatic and sarcastic tone of voice, "you know, brother, that I am totally unfit for business, both on account of my idleness and the bad company I keep."

Convinced that Miss Tonic had shewn his letter to John, her favourite, he made no answer to young Ledger's observation, but assenting to the proposition of separating their concerns, they parted in sullen silence.

Some days after the final separation between Harry and John Ledger, the latter received a letter from Mr. Harrow, from Wales, informing him of the sudden death of his child, who had survived its parent only a few months, and transmitting him a

promisory note for the sum advanced to him to pay off the mortgage on Honeysuckle Farm.

John Ledger sent him an answer, that he begged the child might be buried near its mother; thank'd him for the trouble he had occasioned, and added, that the promisory note he had committed to the flames, and hoped that, together with the whole story, in which he was too much concerned at Honeysuckle-grove, might be ever buried in forgetfulness.

Every anxiety being thus removed from the mind of young Ledger, he pursued his business with his whole attention, and bid a final adieu to his former romantic propensities to gallantry. Harry Ledger still remained under the influence of the woman whom he had long kept, and whom he idolized, tho' the remains of her former beauty were her only recommendation. The ill-qualities of her mind were such as seemed peculiarly

culiarly calculated to destroy his domestic peace, his character and his credit. Her extravagance was boundless in regard to herself, and equalled only by her extreme parsimony towards others: Her vanity and love of gallantry incapable of being cloyed.—But Harry Ledger saw no fault in the peerless Eliza Patch, of the parish of Covent-garden, spinster: His trade dwindled away; his missress saw it, and fled: Ledger droop'd for a few weeks after her departure, and escaped madness and a jail by an early death, not mentioned in the bills of mortality, a broken heart.

CHAP. XXXI.

THE unfortunate death of Miss Tonic had a very visible effect on the health and spirits of her younger sister. Though these two sisters, in consequence of their contrary dispositions and manners, were latterly much apart; yet in their girlish days they had passed much of their time in each others company, and the uncommon vivacity of the elder was then no impediment to her intimacy with the sweet and gentle Harriot.

But increasing years and different sentiments separated them gradually and entirely; and the favorite conversation of Dr. Tonic was such as at all times to disgust this sensible, modest, and delicate young woman: So truly

truly has our "Poet of Reason," described the salutary effects of good sense on our moral feelings:

"Immodest words admit of no defence,
For want of decency, is want of sense."

Harriot Tonic found an asylum from this strange sort of domestic persecution in the house of her aunt Selden, who lived in the neighbourhood. Here Dr. Tonic seldom came, for at his sister's house a strict, tho' liberal conversation always prevailed, which was at all times inimical to the gay sallies of the Doctor, as it was insipid to the very lively fancy of his eldest daughter. Harriot had only at intervals visited her father's house, and staid there only short periods, unless the illness of her father detained her.

During these occasions she became the most assiduous nurse; and her attentions at these times must have brought a blush into the cheeks of Miss Tonic, had not those checks

cheeks been too deeply painted already to admit any new suffusion, and must have occasioned some awkward feelings in the bosom of the father when he recollected how little kindness he had shewn towards Harriot, whilst he was in health and spirits. On these occasions the general coolness of old Tonic towards her never slackened the wish to serve him, and no toil by day or night could diminish her anxious diligence round his sick couch. The pity which she then felt for his sufferings, threw a veil over the feelings of the man—she beheld him as a sick father, and she considered her own tenderness as the natural production of a daughter's feelings: And, in retiring from her office of administering physic, she would repeat, with little less emotion, the prayer of the tender Cordelia:

"O, ye kind gods!
Cure this great breach in his abused nature;
The untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!"

At

At the periods of his restoration to health she was suffered without an effort to retain her to quit the house, and she flew from the boisterous mirth of her father, and the unfeeling conduct and extravagant behaviour of her elder sister, whose smiles or whose attentions the Doctor could procure only by repeated presents, and eternal promises of future indulgences.

On the death of her sister, Harriot repaired immediately to her father's house, ever ready to soothe his sorrow, and, by her kind services, to alleviate the burthen of his present calamity.

No misfortune presses so hard on the mind of the distressed as that which conscience tells us is our own production:

"For these the patient must minister to himself."

The gloomy meditations of old Tonic at length gave way to the healing gentleness of Harriot's

Harriot's attentions; for some time, indeed, the contrasted manners and conduct of his elder and younger daughter filled him with some very severe and poignant reflections on his own behaviour, and he began more and more to suspect that he had been to both a bad parent.

The polite and warm attention which Harriot shewed to her mother-in-law, had its proper effect on old Tonic, whose first symptoms of reform appeared in conducting himself towards his wife with more tenderness, and he ceased to remind her by rudeness and neglect, of the folly of her attachment to him, and the imprudence of her marriage.

Virtue, says an elegant writer, needs only to be seen in order to be admired.—The amiable manners, and correct behaviour of Harriot Tonic effected a general reformation in the house of her father. A severe fit of the gout, in consequence of

his

his late anxiety, had, indeed, powerfully combined to work this alteration in the life, manners, and conversation of Dr. Tonic: Without this fortunate concurrence perhaps the *sage* advice of Mrs. Tonic, who felt her consequence now reviving and the mild and more natural persuasions of Harriot, would have fallen where much good counsel has fallen before, to the ground.

The useful accomplishments which Miss Tonic had learned under Mrs. Selden, did not produce a less visible, nor less valuable reform in the affairs of Dr. Tonic, whose mind began to recover from that dastardly state of doubt and apprehension which a man labours under who is at once extravagant, idle, and avaricious. As his affairs began now to wear a better aspect, and his spirits to return, Dr. Tonic could not but be grateful to the cares of his daughter, and beame daily more attached to her, and more regular in his method of living.

There

These good tidings were communicated very speedily by Miss Tonic to her aunt Selden, and the two families renewed their former intimacy, which inattention and aversion had on one side dissolved, and extreme caution on the other prevented from reuniting—for the Seldens were almost the Antipodes to the Tonics.

CHAP XXXII.

THE sad catastrophe which had cast a gloom over the house of Tonic was soon known at Pagoda Lodge. Old Pursling was too much

"Unused to the melting mood"

to drop a tear over the early and calamitous death of Miss Tonic. Young Pursling declared, with unusual animation of voice and gesture,

gesture, that the death of such a basilisk did as much good to his stomach and nerves as a dose of steel powders. Old Pursling, who thought one daughter as good as the other, provided that she was the heiress apparent, thought his son had now better hopes of success in the more gentle temper of the present Miss Tonic.

Old Pursling, as we have hinted before, kept up a very slender acquaintance either with Capt. Canvass, or his adopted son, and knew little therefore of the pursuits and amusements, or views of the Cassino's inhabitants. Mrs. Pursling, on the contrary, continued her frequent visits to Mrs. Canvass, and knew the whole politics of the Cassino: She was well acquainted with young Canvass's visits both at Tonic's and Selden's, and saw very plainly that the lovely Harriot was the favourite and lover of young Canvass, and that the wishes of the families for the match were unanimous.

The

The acquaintance of old Pursling with Mr. Selden, whose wife we have mentioned as aunt to Harriot Tonic, was merely confined to occasional meetings at the club, or on turnpike business, where the superiority of Selden's conversation and talents for business bred a mean envy and jealousy in the narrow mind of old Pursling, and they had for some years discontinued their annual visits: Nor, since the death of Miss Tonic, had the Doctor and old Pursling kept up their usual chit-chat; and though the Doctor had told Pursling formerly, in the life of his elder daughter, that he perceived with indifference the attachment of young Canvass to Harriot Tonic, old Pursling thought no more of the matter; for the Doctor had not told Pursling that Capt. Canvass was a man of fortune, for the plain reason that he did not know it, as he was very heedless about the welfare of his younger daughter at that period, and had consigned her entirely to the care of his sister, Mrs. Selden, whose house,

house, as we have before hinted, at the time of Capt. Canvass's coming into the country, he seldom frequented. Besides, that all these resources of information were shut against 'squire Pursling, and placed the balance of news in the hands of his wife, his great corpulency and frequent indispositions, prevented him of late from visiting the weekly club, or extending his morning walk as far as that receptacle of news, "the barber's shop,"

> "Where fame displays her varied scroll,
> And wafts a tale from *Pole* to *Pole*."

Yet, with all these disadvantages, old Pursling continued his views on the person, or rather the fortune, of Harriot Tonic, and to read very grave lectures to his son on his want of ardour in the pursuit of so advantageous a match.

The young man heard all these paternal exhortations, delivered in the various modes

of

of persuasion and threats, with sullen silence, or peevish or ridiculous answers. To the threats of his father, he pleaded his ill-state of health; for old Pursling's menaces were, that disobedience to his commands would end in cutting him off with a shilling. To his persuasions he gave the most inattentive ear, or the most surly replies. The most serious consequence would have happened to young Pursling, had the deliberation not been interrupted by an appearance of an incipient consumption attacking young Pursling.

By the advice of the faculty, this young man was sent to Bath, to which place his mother accompanied him; and Pagoda-lodge was for some time left to silence and squire Pursling.

The burden of time was in some measure taken off the shoulders of old Pursling by the receipt of long letters from his wife and son,

son, who had now changed their place, and were residing at the hot wells at Bristol.

The lady's epistles were full of the amusements of Bath, the names of great persons whom Mrs. Pursling had seen there, from some of whom she had actually received curtsies and bows. The longest letters were filled with the very polite expressions and tender civilities of the honourable Captain O'Wheedle, one of those old macaroni blockheads whom time can teach nothing to, and who in spite of the "three warnings," continue to ogle with half-shut eyes; and without teeth, and with gout-crippled feet, will still wear Cupid's livery.

As these polite expressions of this son of Mars were chiefly compliments on the person of Mrs. Pursling, the old gentleman passed over them as very tedious, or laugh'd at them as very ridiculous, and abusing them both for two old fools, proceeded to the letters from his son.

For

For his health he felt some anxiety, as he considered him the probable transmitter of his name to distant posterity. His questions to his son were without end, and his enquiries about his malady, had all the prolixity which questions not very well founded in meaning usually exhibit.

It is generally observed that smatterers in any science are very loquacious. Young Pursling had for a long time been a smatterer in medicine, and this opportunity afforded him by the questions of his father, of shewing his knowledge, he was unwilling to neglect.

His answers were very circumstantial, and according to a mathematical expression, he commenced with a full enunciation of the nature of a pulmonary consumption: Of restoring the powers of the constitution by an immediate application to the lungs, as the *primum mobile* of the constitution. He then advanced into the praises of *gas* and *oxygen*;

and

and a most magnificent description of the inspiration and respiration of this wondrous vital fluid followed. The patient at one time describes himself as wrapt into an ineffable ecstacy of pleasure, and experiencing the utmost joy, without any consequent exhaustion, debility, or decrease of an healthy irritation, At another time he described violent fits of laughter, excited by no external cause, and acting to no visible good effect: All his present sensations, he added, which were produced by this fluid, tended to make him lament those poor mortals who were condemned to breathe the common air, two thirds of which, he asserted, were known to be hostile to animal life.

These letters, of which we in the short limits of our history can give but an abridged extract, were read by old Squire Pursling, with astonishment, doubt and apprehension.

Sometimes he thought the poor lad was out of his senses: Sometimes he even suspected that he was presuming to banter one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace; at other times he was ready to set off for Bristol, to taste of the pleasures that produced no exhaustion or debility, which he could not but think were superior to any enjoyments even of his quondam London clubs,

CHAP. XXXIII.

WE will leave Pursling amidst his reveries over the very erudite letters of his son, and acquaint the reader with the first arrival of Capt. Canvass and his family into the neighbourhood where the scene of our history is laid.

Capt. Canvass stopped his carriage in the village of ——, and walked about the place of his intended residence, surveying both the Cassino and another house at no great distance, which stood in the midst of a beautiful meadow, and was embosom'd by some fine tall elms.

The house was substantial and plain; and those parts which appertained to the farm remarkably neat and well arranged. Capt. Canvass thought the inhabitant of such a place would be an acquaintance worth cultivating. The front was of white stucco, and the size of the mansion seemed to proclaim that its possessor was entitled to the very singular denomination of a *gentleman farmer*.

On his return to the Green Dragon, when the landlord brought in the cold meat and ale, the latter of which he praised in terms that would not have disgraced the finest burgundy, Capt. Canvass asked Mr. Boniface, whose house that was on this side the Cassino.

"Sir," says Boniface, with much importance in his face, "that gentleman, Sir, is my particular friend and old schoolfellow. Mr. Selden, Sir, is a very extraordinary man: He and I set off together in life in country

country business. He was bred up to it; I was not: He throve, and I failed. I was bred up to be a mercer, and thinking that trade fitter for my sisters than myself, I was resolved, on the death of my father, to undertake a more manly employment. I took as large a farm as I could stock, and delighted myself with being called a gentleman farmer, forsooth.—But I hope, Sir, you like your ale, it is my own brewing, and though I say it that should not say it, there is no such in London or Yorkshire."

Capt. Canvass took a draught of this panacea, and gave the tankard to the landlord. Mr. Boniface paid a very strong and practical compliment to his own manufactory, and proceeded in his harrangue with fresh alacrity.

"I was saying, Sir, that I turned farmer, without being educated to it, a strange tho' common error: I was soon obliged to hire a bailiff, to whom, to conceal my own ignorance

rance, I entrusted all my affairs. I soon failed.—The bailiff now occupies the same farm, and being no gentleman, as I was, do you see, makes a very good farmer.—But, as I was saying, Mr. Selden is an extraordinary man, and was wise enough to stick to the business to which he took to young, and so is the reverse of me. From becoming at first a farmer, he is now a gentleman. From being a gentleman, I am now the landlord of the Green Dragon. My wife, thank God——"

"I should like to hear more of this Mr. Selden," says Captain Canvass, a little alarmed at the host's loquacity.

"Mr. Selden, Sir, is an extraordinary man; he is a Justice of Peace, and is of desperate use to all the neighbourhood: For was it not for him, the Bench would go on very sadly, I believe; and find work for the gentlemen of Westminster-Hall. 'Squire Pursling here, in the neighbourhood, a deadly

ly rich man, and a Londoner, is a terrible prattler, and bothers matters with his jaw and his blunders and his obstinacy, till Mr. Selden silences him, by telling him to go home and read the act; which advice the 'Squire does not relish, and stays away for whole months at a time, and so things go on well.—Mr. Selden is a desperate thriving man, and set his family a going as soon as they were able, as a body may say. Two sons and three daughters he married as soon as they were of age; for says he, one day at the Green Dragon, to me, Joe Boniface, 'it is a shame that fathers should stop the marriages of their children, instead of promoting them, because they do not choose to lug out the cash. Now,' says Mr. Selden, 'my whole business has been to lay by a sufficient quantity of money, in order to get wives and husbands for my children, as soon as it was right, that they might not go pining and whining about the house, and look as if they said, Papa, when will you die.'

"My wife, Sir, you must know, was juſt in such a situation. Her father was an old curmudgeon, and though she was near thirty, and his only daughter, would not give her a shilling, and so she remained single: But, however, she was a staid girl, and a good housewife; and I wanted such a wife, and liked her, and thought an honest and careful woman was better than a rich one that was not so, and so I found it; and had I been as careful of matters abroad as she was of them at home—"

"Let me hear more of Mr. Selden," replied Captain Canvass, "and be so good as to order my chaise, Mr. Boniface."

"Why, Mr. Selden is an extraordinary man; he used to do all my exercises at school for me, and is a mainly good scholard, for he studied at the Temple, and during his vacations he would pass his time at a tenant's of his father's in learning husbandry, to which from a boy he was inclined: For,

For, 'Boniface,' says he, one day that we had a holiday at school, 'do you see that large field yonder;'—Yes, says I, and sees it is plowed and well cleaned, which it used not to be.—Mr. Selden smiled; and I found afterwards that he was accustomed to spend his whole holiday in plowing that very field.—And his father, old Counsellor Selden, was very sorry, after he had discovered his son's talent for agriculture, that he had placed him at the Temple, where he studied hard indeed, but greatly injured his health, in pursuing a life to which he had no inclination.

"Mr. Selden used a different method with his sons to find out what business they liked; and as he has a large library, he used to let the boys, at a certain age, be a good deal there, but always of their own accord. Tom, his eldest son, was always reading books of surgery. Jack, the second, was always turning over old parchments, and conning old leases: And Harry, the youngest, was always busied with his port folios, and

drawing the portraits of all the family, and their occasional visitors.—In the course of time Mr. Selden seeing his plan succeed to discover their propensities to these various professions, he gave each of them the choice of that to which their voluntary studies showed that they were inclined.—Mr. Thomas Selden is now an eminent surgeon; Mr. John Selden, a conveyancer of great practice; and Harry Selden is one of the first portrait painters in London."

Capt. Canvass thank'd the landlord for this history, and resolved, on settling at the Cassino, to procure the acquaintance of so intelligent a person as Mr. Selden appeared.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

WHEN Captain Canvass was settled in the Cassino, he felt a great inclination to visit Mr. Selden, and a stranger to the forms of ceremony and presentation, he one morning set out to introduce himself.

As Captain Canvass walked up a broad avenue, which led to the house, he surveyed the edifice with pleasure. Its huge thick and ornamented chimnies on its ridged roof; the broad and lofty casements gave the air of antiquity and rude simplicitly to the building, which distinguished it from the modern ones about it.

It was not mounted upon a high hill like a beacon, exhibiting the ostentatious mind of the owner, but on a small rising, and defended

fended from the sun and wind by umbrageous trees, which wore the livery of some centuries ago. Capt. Canvass entered a spacious porch, surrounded with seats, and the portal was opened by a grave elderly servant in a brown coat.

On enquiring for Mr. Selden, Capt. Canvass was led into a large room filled with books, and was told that Mr Selden, who was busied in his farm since the early part of the morning, would return to dinner at two o'clock. The Captain, looking at his watch, and perceiving that he had half an hour to wait, quietly sat himself down in expectation of his host.

At the time precisely came in Mr. Selden; he was informed by the servant, that a gentleman, who appeared by his dress to be a navy officer, was in his study. He repaired thither immediately with great alacrity, as the character of a British seaman was in a peculiar manner agreeable to Mr. Selden.—

On

On his entering the study, he beheld Capt. Canvass very busily employed with a map spread before him on the table, and a compass extended in his hand, and in a state of mind between attention and reverie, he was whistling the tune of ' poor Jack.'

On his first entering the study, Captain Canvass was astonished at a sight so new, as so large a collection of books of various sorts, which seemed arranged in very graceful order; and betrayed the same appearance of ludicrous surprize which a boy does the first time he looks into a show box, where he sees in perspective a fine view of the Lord Mayor's house, and his georgeous carriage standing before its superb portal.

On Mr. Selden opening the study door, he found Captain Canvass in that state of ease and tranquillity which a man feels with his old acquaintance, namely, the map and the compass. A firm and loud hem announced the approach of Mr. Selden, and instantaneously

instantaneously Captain Canvass was on his legs, and had met the advances of his host more than half way.

"Mr. Selden," says the Captain, "I am a man of few words, and not overfond of ceremony."

"My name is Capt. Canvass, formerly of the Dragon: I am a ſtranger to these parts, and I knew I ſhould meet with an hearty welcome from ſuch a man as you. I have taken for a long lease the Caſſino of the Duke of —, and I hope we ſhall be neighbours."

Mr. Selden ſhook the Capt. by the hand and ſeated him. "On coming to the Green Dragon a few weeks ago, I enquired to whom your houſe belonged, as it appeared to have a more ſenſible and ſober appearance than the gew-gaws which are ſtuck about the neighbourhood: and my landlord, who is a very chatty man, gave me ſo interresting an account

account of yourself, that I was determined, Mr. Selden, immediately on settling here, to call on you without any ceremony; a thing I am not over fond of, I aſſure you," continued the Capt. with a facetious smile.

"I am quite happy to see you," Captain Canvass, replied Mr. Selden; "among honeſt men there is no occaſion for it, and among rogues it is a dangerous mask."

"Mr. Selden, your looks correspond with your speech."

"You are then a physiognomist, Capt. Canvass."

"Why faith no; I do not judge of features, or ſhapes, or such fair weather marks: but I cannot help deducing from circumſtances the probable traits of a man's character. When I saw your house with all this air of comfort about it, all solid, and free from ſhew; nor disfigured by a thousand earthen

earthen pots on the top of it by way of chimnies, nor the walls filled with windows like a sugar-baker's manufactory, and exposed like an inn to the eye of diſtant paſſengers, I could not but think I ſhould find a rational acquaintance in the inhabitant: and Maſter Boniface, by his hiſtory, more than confirmed my ſuſpicions." Mr. Selden bowed complacently.

"I have been little uſed to the world, Mr. Selden, and very little attached to it; I mean to common acquaintances, common forms, and common ceremonies, or common occurrencies. I married a woman only because I loved her, and when I had a very narrow income. My friends thought it a very imprudent match, and turned their backs on me. When my old uncle deceaſed, and I ſucceeded to his eſtate, which was very conſiderable, they turned their faces towards me again. This diſguſted me: I had married a very honeſt woman, and I am ſure I could not have done better."

Selden

Selden smiled, a full approbation of the Captain's sentiments, and began to feel an increasing sympathy towards his open-hearted guest. His smiles encouraged the loquacity of the Captain, and he continued:

"As on quitting the navy I resided chiefly in London, in a house left my wife by a very old friend, I contracted a love for London and its environs, and an unwillingness to return to the country,—where my uncle's large mansion-house stood, and where my newly-revived friends generally resided, I was looking out for a house, when I saw the Cassino, lately occupied by the Duke of ——, advertised to be let on a long or ſhort lease. I surveyed it and was pleased with it, tho' I did not find it quite that paradise which the terms of the advertisement had described it. As it ſtands upon an eminence, I sometimes find the rays of the great luminary penetrating too far into my moſt habitable rooms; and that the zephyrs from the

the weſtern quarter ſometimes visit too rudely my roof and chimnies; but I ſtill find it comfortable, and ſhall be very glad to see Mr. Selden there as ſoon as his conveniency will permit him; I hope no ceremony will prevent."

Capt. Canvas was preparing to leave the house, when the ſervant announced dinner, and the Captain, tho' a profeſſed enemy of ceremony, was haſtening his departure with all the hurry of the moſt formal manner; Mr. Selden caught him by the arm, and inſisted on his attending him to the dining-room; and diſpatching a perſon to the Caſſino to inform Mrs. Canvaſs of the Captain's engagement, conducted him without further reluctant ceremony to the dining parlour.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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